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**JOURNALISM
REVIEW**

LIES
HALF-TRUTHS
OFFICIAL DECEPTIONS



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the door.

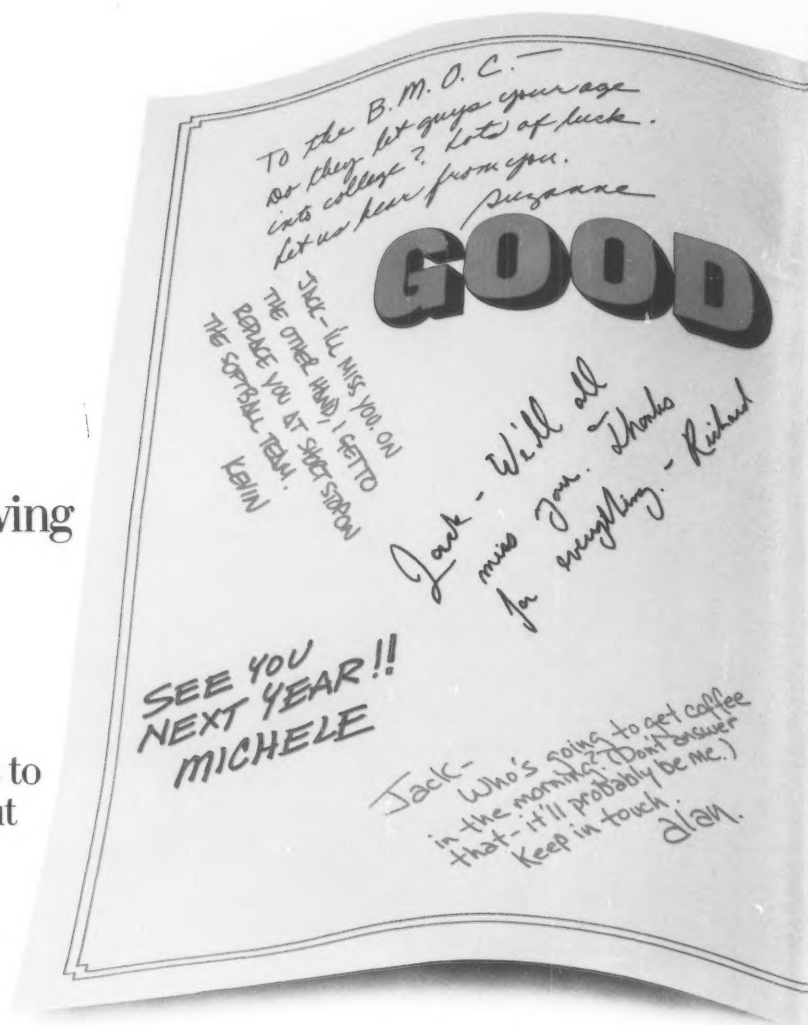
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Ed

LUCK!

to Joe College -
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I know who can get in
and out of college in one
year. All the best,
Alice

Jack
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you? Take care of
yourself. Barry

such as Howard University and Hampton Institute, helping minority students become engineers and computer scientists.

Since 1971, almost 500 people from IBM have taken part at more than 135 institutions.

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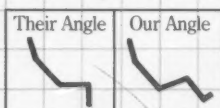
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Excerpt from the *Review's* founding editorial, Autumn 1961

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We'll stop at nothing to illuminate it.

The work week.
It's five days long. In the normal world.

But our world is news. And our week is far from normal.

The news week of Newsweek runs from Monday until Saturday

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Because when a story breaks on Sunday, we have to be ready. We have to be ready to stop the presses. To turn on a dime. To take a major news event and piece it

together even as it is breaking.

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It affords Newsweek reporters the time to scratch for the story underneath the story. To depart from horse race journalism and

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arrive at analysis. To go beyond the simple facts to reveal the human issues. To tell people why.

The lengths we'll go to do this are evident each week in Newsweek. When the government wouldn't let the press into Grenada, our photographer got into Grenada. When the presiden-

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Our weeks haven't gone unnoticed. In fact, Newsweek has won over 600 awards for excellence in journalism. More than any other newsweekly.

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Mon.

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Fri.

The week we had to write in a day.

Some weeks, it takes less than a week to write Newsweek. But not less effort.

The Marine massacre in Beirut was one of those weeks.

Normally, Saturday night is when we put our next week's issue to bed. But the Marine massacre in Lebanon early on

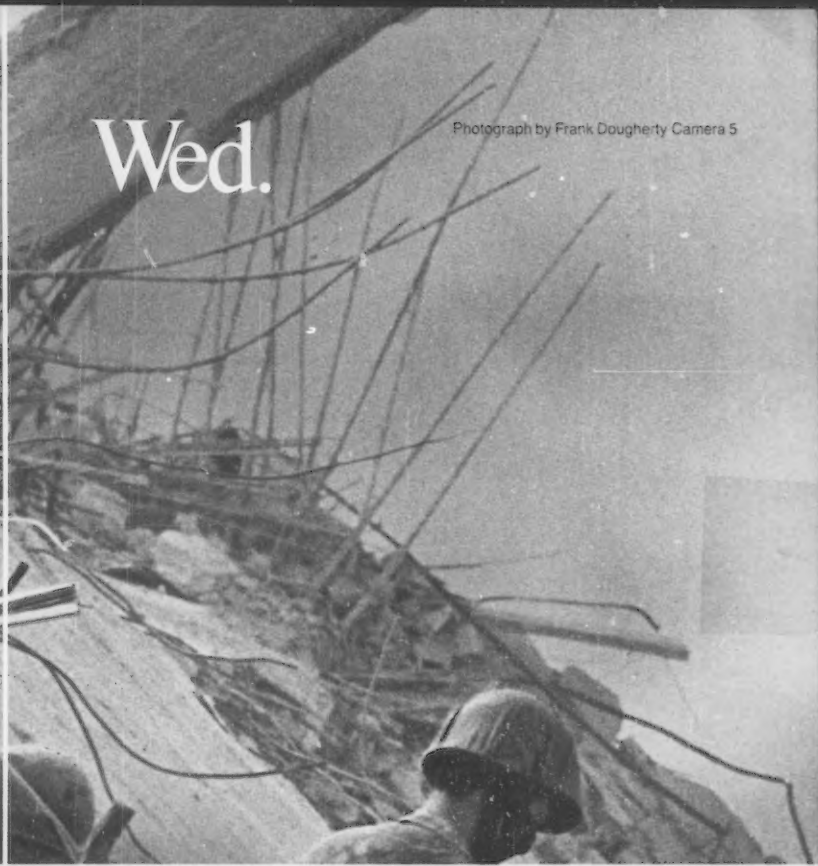
that Sunday morning was a rude awakening.

Minutes after the shockwaves had subsided, Newsweek assigned a team of reporters to the scene. Back at the magazine, we stopped the presses on our issue due on the newsstands the following day.

As the details of the tragedy became clear, we scrapped our cover story and wrote the story we wished we never had to write.

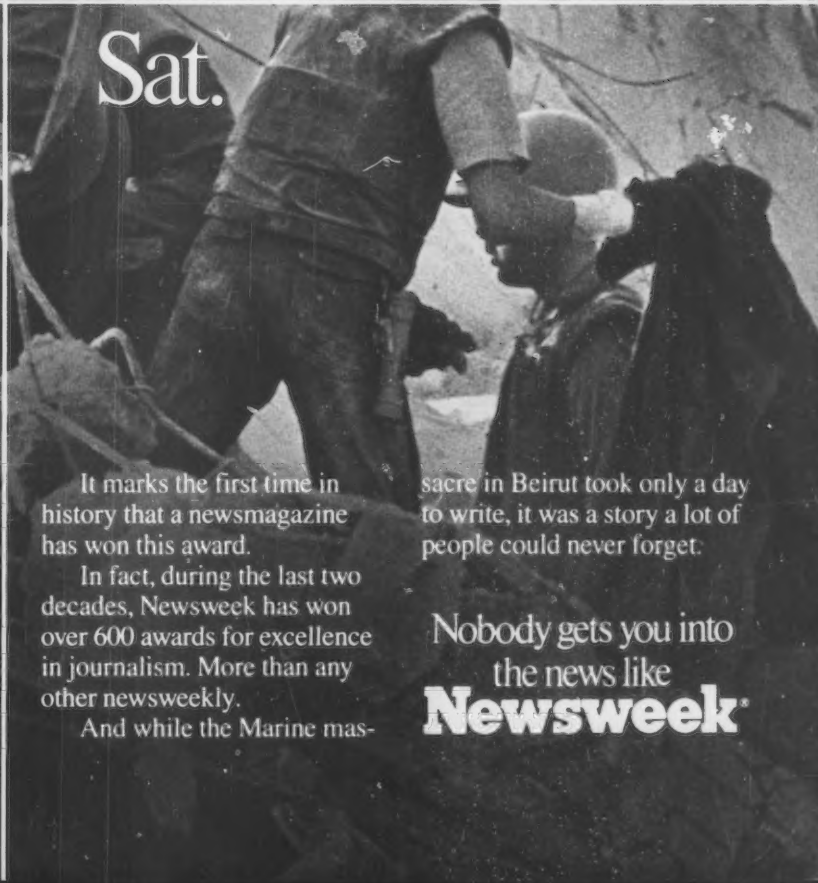
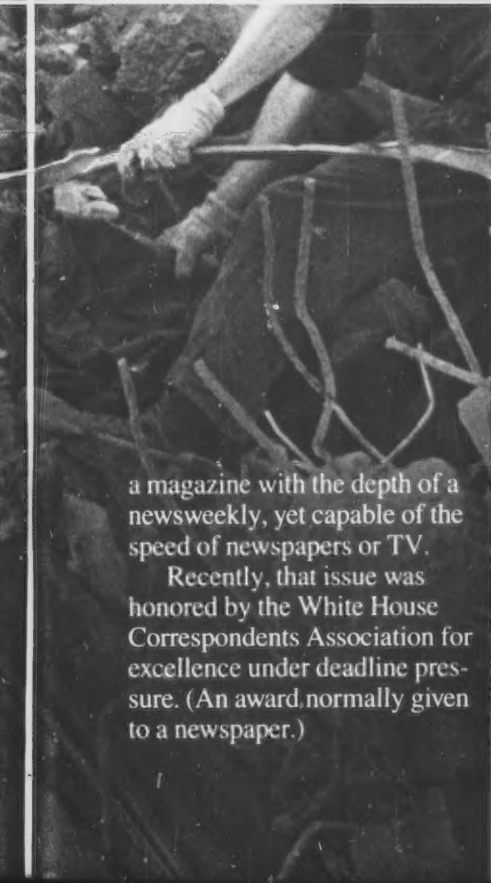
We were the only news-weekly to bring you that story the very next day.

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Wed.

Photograph by Frank Dougherty Camera 5



Sat.

a magazine with the depth of a newswatch, yet capable of the speed of newspapers or TV.

Recently, that issue was honored by the White House Correspondents Association for excellence under deadline pressure. (An award normally given to a newspaper.)

It marks the first time in history that a newsmagazine has won this award.

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sacre in Beirut took only a day to write, it was a story a lot of people could never forget.

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The week that took 50 years to write.

Some issues of Newsweek take a little longer to get out than others.

For our 50th anniversary issue, we decided we weren't going to rehash the news of the last half-century, but rather re-examine it.

For over 50 years,

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The common men and women who were touched by the news. Shaped by the news. Whose very lives were changed

by the news.

We selected a typical American town, Springfield, Ohio. There, we chose five American families. And sent a team of reporters to unearth the last 50 years of their lives.

The resulting saga took more than a year to research and write.



Wed.

Photograph by Greg Pease-Baltimore

Sat.

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It was Newsweek at its best: in-depth, insightful, in perspective.

That issue was honored by the American Society of Magazine Editors last year when it was chosen as a finalist in the National Magazine Awards.

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CHRONICLE

Reagan's global reach

Last year, in a document designated National Security Decision Directive 130, the National Security Council authorized a sweeping review of all the federal government's international information and communications programs. According to last summer's *Chronicle of International Communication*, a Washington-based newsletter which received part of the classified document, NSDD-130 makes clear that the Reagan administration sees international communications as "an integral part of U.S. national security policy and strategy." In addition to advocating the expansion of such programs as Armed Forces Radio and TV, Radio Free Europe, and Voice of America, NSDD-130 calls for the development of a long-term strategy for communications assistance to third world countries, a new program for a joint government-industry effort to strengthen U.S. book publishing and marketing abroad, and increased research on foreign public

opinion. The *Chronicle* also reported that NSDD-130 "sanctions an increase in U.S. military peacetime 'Psyops' [psychological operations] so long as the operations conform to U.S. law and policy and are coordinated with other government agencies."

While NSDD-130 outlines the administration's agenda for its second term, administration officials have long considered international communications a key instrument in selling American foreign policy abroad. Under the direction of President Reagan's old friend United States Information Agency Director Charles Z. Wick, and with generous funding from Congress, the government's information machinery is already being overhauled and expanded. And new communications technologies are already delivering the administration's message around the globe.

This year, for example, the USIA's TV and Film Service, formerly an agency back-

water, will begin regular broadcasts over what agency officials say is the world's first international television network. Called Worldnet, the network currently links TV studios in Washington to about forty embassies and consulates overseas. Foreign journalists are invited to the U.S. outposts, where they question top administration officials such as Secretaries of State and Defense Shultz and Weinberger by means of a one-way video, two-way audio satellite transmission. The idea is credited to USIA director Wick, who saw the possibility of using satellites to bring administration policymakers face to face with foreign journalists, usually in time to make the evening news and the next day's newspapers abroad.

Worldnet was first used on November 3, 1983, when U.N. Ambassador Jeane Kirkpatrick and the prime ministers of Barbados and St. Lucia answered questions from foreign journalists about the U.S. invasion of Grenada. Since then, about sixty hour-long programs have been aired at irregular intervals, and Worldnet has expanded into four regional systems originating from Washington: Euronet is beamed to Europe, Arnet to Latin America, Afnet to Africa, and Eanet to East Asia and Australia.

This spring Worldnet is scheduled to begin regular daily broadcasts totaling twelve hours a week. Most of these programs will be aimed solely at Europe, where, according to USIA congressional testimony, the administration is particularly interested in selling its foreign policy to the post-World War II "successor generation." Alvin Snyder, formerly a CBS News executive producer and now director of USIA's TV and film service, says the agency hopes to expand the number of Worldnet's European downlinks from twelve to sixty and has contracted with European cable operators and hotels to carry its programs. Pointing to the large number of foreign news organizations that have used Worldnet video or have quoted from its press conferences, Snyder says that the network is already an astounding success. "It's extraordinary," he says. "We've had more media coverage in the past year with Worldnet than in the past thirty."

Critics of Worldnet accuse the USIA of

Controlled access: A satellite network now lets administration officials beam their messages directly to foreign journalists like this Italian broadcaster.



Courtesy USIA

“Thank you very much, we are deeply honored. *‘Climate of Death’* is the story of nine Americans who went to El Salvador to get involved. But instead they got in the way. All but one murdered by the same Salvadoran military that our government supports.

Each death was significant, but taken collectively, we believe, it mirrors something very real in El Salvador. That is, that people die with uncomfortable regularity. And no one is immune.

For Larry Lee, Craig Franklin, Alex Jonsson, Jon Dann, Bob Campos, Kenneth Swartz and our news director at KRON-TV in San Francisco, Mike Ferring, we are indeed honored. Thank you for recognizing this small effort.”

*KRON-TV's Bob Jimenez,
accepting the duPont
Columbia Award - the station's
second in two years.*



news management on a global scale and fear that the network has become a partisan propaganda outlet rather than a bona fide information service like the BBC, a concern that has periodically been raised about government-sponsored broadcasting since the USIA was founded in 1953. "Worldnet is better than the Radio Free Europe cold-war approach," says John Nichols, a journalism professor at Pennsylvania State University who often writes about the USIA. "But it is a controlled dialogue — they select the journalists at one end and the U.S. officials at the other." According to USIA records, only three elected Democrats have appeared on a Worldnet program.

Several foreign correspondents say they are wary of the network and see it as a means by which administration officials can literally avoid the gaze of experienced foreign journalists. (Worldnet's one-way video link does not allow the official being questioned to see his questioners.) BBC Television's Washington bureau chief, Martin Bell, says his network rarely uses Worldnet video because the BBC "doesn't show propaganda." "[Worldnet] is part of American propaganda," agrees Klaus Emmerich, chief U.S. correspondent for the Austrian Radio and Television Network. "It's the official Amer-

ican version they choose to represent." Emmerich says Austrian Radio and TV also avoids using Worldnet and, along with Bell, believes that "the real danger for foreign correspondents is that Worldnet will monopolize high-ranking U.S. officials."

USIA's Snyder defends Worldnet programs as "no-holds-barred press conferences that are open for everyone to cover." He says that showcasing administration officials makes sense. "The idea behind America's use of Worldnet is to explain U.S. foreign policy," Snyder says. "The best people to do that are the people who make that policy."

Democrats seem to agree. "Worldnet has been received quite well on both sides of the aisle," reports Robert Boyer, senior staff consultant to the House Foreign Affairs Committee. Nevertheless, he says, the House Subcommittee on International Operations plans to take a closer look at the network during the State Department budget hearings this spring. So far, "Worldnet is . . . the U.S. government's version of *Meet the Press*," Boyer says. "But maybe what we need is an *ABC Nightline* format with more opposing views."

Jeff Chester

Jeff Chester is a free-lance writer and TV producer who lives in San Francisco.

The Taiwan connection

Early last November, *China Times*, one of the largest and most influential Chinese-language newspapers in the U.S., abruptly ceased publication. Although the paper's Taiwanese publisher cited financial and personnel difficulties, former *China Times* staff members say the true reason for the closing was political. The demise of *China Times*, along with the more recent revelation that Taiwan's military intelligence agency was linked to the killing of a dissident Chinese journalist in California last October, illustrates how the long arm of Taiwan's ruling Kuomintang Party manipulates the Chinese-American press.

Founded in 1982, *China Times* was the sister paper of *China Times* of Taipei, Taiwan's largest-circulation daily. North America's highly competitive Chinese-language press — there are at least twenty-five publications serving New York, Los Angeles, and San Francisco alone — is divided into two tiers: tiny storefront newspapers catering to local communities, and national dailies funded from abroad. With more than 200 employees and distribution on both coasts, *China Times* hoped to become the dominant

“

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”

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In an analysis of news coverage by California's 119 daily newspapers, Ben Bagdikian found that Jack Anderson is the most popular op-ed columnist in the state. Bagdikian detailed his analysis in the November 1984 issue of *California* magazine.

According to Bagdikian, "Favorite op-ed columnist, by far, was Jack Anderson, but he is not political in the partisan sense since he prints inside items about all kinds of politicians."

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CHRONICLE

national daily of a growing Chinese-American population. Unlike its largest competitor, *Sing Tao Jih Pao*, a Hong Kong daily reprinted with the addition of local news for Chinese communities in California, Vancouver, Toronto, and New York, *China Times* mixed coverage of Asia with a heavy dose of American news. And, unlike the *World Journal*, also the sister paper of a Taiwan daily, it employed a good many American-trained reporters and editors and was willing to deviate from the rigid, cold-war line of the KMT. In addition, *China Times* appeared to be on solid financial ground. At the time of its closing, the paper had just finished investing over \$2 million in equipment and a new printing facility in California.

China Times's troubles began last summer, when the daily offered extensive coverage of the first team from the People's Republic of China to compete at the Olympics. Even though the paper's reporting was unabashedly pro-Taiwan, such attention to the communists upset conservative members of the KMT. Feathers were ruffled again in September when *China Times* ran an editorial criticizing "Reagan and his comrades" for producing "the most reactionary platform of the Republican Party in several decades." Taiwan President Chiang Ching-Kuo report-

edly remarked that *China Times* was hurting Sino-American relations. Publisher Yu Chi Chung — who had already been reprimanded for the paper's Olympics coverage — immediately flew to New York, fired the two editors responsible for the editorial, and warned that further deviations from the party line would not be tolerated. Two months later, Yu announced that *China Times* was folding its North American operations. "In Taiwan, money is not important, and journalism is not important," says Yu Kuo Chi, one of the editors fired in September. "Only politics is important."

But politics, money, and journalism are closely linked in the Chinese newspaper business. Under the state of martial law that has existed on Taiwan for more than thirty years, it is forbidden to export large amounts of capital without permission from the KMT. This allows the party to control foreign investment — and, if it chooses, to limit it to loyal members of the party cadre. "To say it is politics and not money that closed the *China Times* is not exactly true," says one former editorial staff member who requested anonymity. "The paper on Taiwan was more like propaganda for the party, but the *China Times* was more independent. We needed money to finance the paper, and even though



Courtesy Newsweek

Murdered journalist Henry Liu

the money belonged to [Yu] he had to ask permission to send it to the United States. [In the end,] they didn't permit [money] to come from Taiwan because the newspaper was not what they wanted."

The closing of *China Times* came less than a month after the murder of Henry Liu, a journalist who was shot outside his Daly City, California, home on October 15. Liu's unauthorized biography of President Chiang Ching-Kuo had raised a stir when it was published in Hong Kong in 1975 and again in 1984, when a revised edition was issued. At the time of his death, Liu was about to complete biographies of two old-line KMT officers who had broken with Chiang's father,

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on CBS' "Business and the Media"

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Generalissimo Chiang Kai-Shek. Many in California's Chinese community speculated that the murder was a political assassination.

When the story broke, *China Times* played it prominently on page one, while the more conservative *World Journal* ran only a short item beneath the fold on page 3. Although both papers mentioned robbery and extortion as possible motives for the killing, *China Times* stayed with the story and reported that the police suspected a political motive and that the FBI was investigating a possible link to Taiwan. By contrast, an editorial in the *World Journal* cautioned its readers against making "hasty judgments" and later gave its front page over to a State Department statement which said that the U.S. had "no indication" of a Taiwan connection in the case. "The *China Times* was more responsible, that's why it was shut down," says an editor at the rival *Centre Daily News*, adding that "now that the *China Times* is gone, the *World Journal* has become even more conservative in its coverage."

Ironically, last January, months after *China Times* had ceased publication, the Taiwan government announced that several high-ranking officers in its military intelligence agency were implicated in Liu's murder. The unusual admission led to the sus-

pension of several officials and sparked a major political scandal.

Meanwhile, Yu Kuo Chi, *China Times*'s former editor, has taken a position at New York's *Pei Mei News*, an independent offshoot of *Sing Tao*, whose publisher runs an import-export business between Hong Kong and the People's Republic of China. "They promised that the writers can write what they want," Yu says. "But *Pei Mei* has been pro-PRC," he adds. "There is no such thing as a free paper in Chinatown. There is always a hand behind every writer, and behind that hand is either the People's Republic or Taiwan."

Joel Millman

Joel Millman is a free-lance writer who lives in New York.

Publish and perish in Ohio

The *Educational Informer* was born in 1977 as a flyer passed out at the gates of the Wheeling-Pittsburgh Steel plant in Yorkville, Ohio. Soon it matured into a regular newspaper for the union employees at the factory, some 800 members of Local 1223 of the United Steel-

workers. But last year, just before its eighth birthday, the *Educational Informer* suffered an untimely death. Largely because it didn't like what the newspaper had to say, Wheeling-Pittsburgh management fired the three workers who gave it a voice — the paper's editor, the union president who supervised him, and another union official who was an active writer.

On the banks of the Ohio River, just across from Wheeling, West Virginia, the big plant dominates Yorkville. It rolls and tinplates steel that is produced at a sister plant in nearby Steubenville. Last March 22, Frank Puskas, the *Educational Informer*'s forty-nine-year-old editor, reported for his shift in the electrolytic tin-coating department of the factory as he had for twenty-nine years, but this time a company official and a plant guard were waiting. He was dismissed, and so were John Kachur, the sixty-year-old president of the local union and a thirty-nine-year veteran at the factory, and John Tirpak, a thirty-year-old grievance committeeman for the union. "I call it Pearl Harbor Day," says Puskas. "It came without warning."

Freedom of the labor press isn't the only issue in the case. The local union's rejection of a labor-management productivity program is part of the story. And, in Tirpak's case,

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the company charges that, along with articles in the union paper, he authored some threatening graffiti. But a reading of the minutes of Puskas and Kachur's arbitration hearing (a ruling on Tirpak's separate hearing had not been made at the time this article went to press) shows that it was the *Educational Informer* that got the company's goat. Wheeling-Pittsburgh introduced twenty-eight articles it didn't like as evidence that the two men deserved to lose their jobs. "That was their main objective, to shut the paper down," says Puskas, "and they achieved it." Local 1223 decided to halt publication until the legal wrangle over the firings is resolved.

Compared with some newspapers in the Steelworkers union, the *Educational Informer* seems fairly mild. A few miles east, in Homestead, Pennsylvania, for example, Local 1397's newspaper regularly runs a "dumbest foreman of the month" contest and has not had a kind word for U.S. Steel for about a decade. "The *Educational Informer* has been a typical, pretty gutsy, pretty good local union paper," says Donald Dalena, secretary-treasurer of the United Steelworkers Press Association. "It's won some awards in our competitions." Neither the plant industrial relations representative nor

the company's spokesman in Pittsburgh would talk about the paper or the firings. But, according to Puskas, the *Informer* was the only regularly published union paper at any Wheeling-Pittsburgh plant, and "it made them so mad they couldn't stand it."

Among the articles that company lawyers cited at the arbitration hearing, for example, was one opining that the company had been "too cheap to feed the wives" at a dinner honoring a retiring superintendent. Another attacked the company for contracting jobs outside the community: "If Wheeling-Pittsburgh wants to help the poor people, then let them stop creating so many of them." An article by Tirpak, who seems to have been the most militant critic of the company, complained that supervisors had failed to clean up acid fumes in one part of the plant. "When will they get tired of facing the fact that they

Three who were silenced:

When executives at a Wheeling-Pittsburgh steel plant objected to what John Kachur (left), Frank Puskas (center), and John Tirpak were publishing in a union newspaper, the three men were fired.

CJR/Boyd Nelson



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CHRONICLE

will not be allowed to cripple and kill?" he wrote in a signed article. "If you try to stop this union from deleting hazards you are a criminal. . . ."

Most of the articles that management brought to the hearing, however, took shots at a program the company was trying to implement in Yorkville — the Labor Management Participant Team. LMPT, as it is called, was aimed at getting workers to improve productivity and quality, "to advance the interests of the corporation and the security of the employees," says Wheeling-Pittsburgh spokesman Ken Maxcy, adding that the program has been successfully implemented at many Wheeling-Pittsburgh plants. Such programs are a matter for heated debate within the labor movement — proponents contend that labor must cooperate with efforts at boosting productivity, while critics argue that the programs tend to solve management's problems at the expense of employees, eliminating jobs, for example, but ignoring safety. Within the local union at Yorkville, too, LMPT was fiercely debated. Union president Kachur, who favored the program at first, began to feel that it was not a two-way street. At a local union meeting in May, members present voted to "withdraw" from the program, and the

Educational Informer began printing articles criticizing it. "LMPT is absolutely dead," said one, ". . . let's keep it that way." Some weeks after that, Kachur, Tirpak, and Puskas were out of work, officially charged, among other things, with "engaging . . . in and permitting publication and dissemination of materials which ridicule, defame, and malign management. . . ."

A "bizarre" arbitration

Under the National Labor Relations Act, the labor press has usually enjoyed protections similar to those guaranteed by the First Amendment. If the fired employees expected a quick reversal on grounds of journalistic freedom, however, they were disappointed. When their demand that their jobs be restored was submitted to arbitration, the arbitrator, John Leahy, ruled that "much of that which was written by the president and the editor could pass muster, if it did not have the goal of the destruction of a contractual obligation. . . ." Leahy reasoned that LMPT was part of the contract, so the union had no right to wage war against it. Some Steelworkers officials say that participation in the program is voluntary. But in any case, argues William Payne, the Steelworkers lawyer handling the case, the union newspaper is entitled to speak

out about the program. Payne calls the arbitrator's opinion "one of the most bizarre you'll see." And, indeed, it seems to wander away from the facts. At one point arbitrator Leahy articulates his high opinion of management in Japan; at another, he comments on the "hard core of Marxists" he believes still remains in the Steelworkers union. He notes that the car of an employee who favored the LMPT program had been vandalized in the company parking lot, and reasons that because the local union president appointed people who wrote articles that "undermined the peace and stability of the plant," the union president was responsible for the damage. Because of their long, discipline-free histories with Wheeling-Pittsburgh, however, Leahy reduced the company's punishment of Kachur and Puskas to a suspension of twelve weeks and five days without pay, and the two have since returned to work. Tirpak, meanwhile, a father of two, has remained suspended for nearly a year. His case includes charges that he wrote phrases such as "death to scabs" and "death to the LMPT committee" on some factory walls. He contends he was on layoff at the time the graffiti were written.

But now comes round two. Kachur and Puskas, through New York City labor law-



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yer Arthur Z. Schwartz, have sued in federal court to overturn the arbitrator's ruling. So has the Steelworkers union, a move it rarely takes, since it is an unwritten rule that, to avoid costly litigation, both companies and the union rarely appeal arbitrators' rulings. The two suits are likely to be consolidated. Meanwhile, the union has filed a complaint with the National Labor Relations Board charging Wheeling-Pittsburgh with unfair labor practices. Victory in court would win back pay for the fired workers, but more than that, says Schwartz, it would win "a ruling you could use in other cases, so employees don't get fired for their opinions."

Coal mining and steel, Puskas observes, are "the main trees that shelter this valley. Wheeling-Pittsburgh is a main provider, and nobody with any brains would do anything to make them go out of business." But at the same time, he says, the company "humiliated the top union leadership and threw its newspaper in the garbage."

"It's not a militant paper," Puskas insists. "We have every right to print our paper, and I hope we print it again."

Michael Hoyt

Michael Hoyt is a free-lance writer who often writes about labor.

Backing off from the Murdoch fix

In eastern Ohio's Lake County, old-fashioned, small-town newspapering has won out over a Murdochian format of sex, crime, and screaming headlines. *The Lake County Telegraph*, which a little more than two years ago had advertised for a managing editor who "understands the Murdoch concept" ("The Murdoch Fix," *CJR*, March/April 1983), has returned, contritely, to straight local news coverage.

Published in Painesville, a county seat about thirty miles east of Cleveland, the 163-year-old evening *Telegraph* had once been the region's dominant paper. In 1982, almost ten years after the *Telegraph* had been crippled by a bitter strike, its 17,000 daily circulation was still only half that of its aggressive competitor, *The Lake County News-Herald*. Scrambling to put the paper back on top, president Robert H. Rowley hired newspaper marketing consultant Stuart Schwartz.

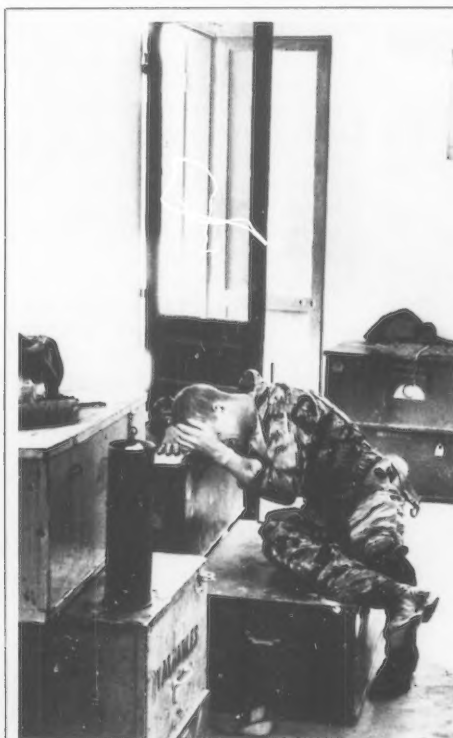
Under Schwartz's guidance, the *Telegraph* tightened its writing, jazzed up its headlines, and steered clear of the overly intellectual, preachy tone that Schwartz feels burdens too many newspapers. "Papers must listen hard

to what people want, and editors often don't," says Schwartz, who is now director of newspaper marketing for Lee Enterprises, a broadcast and newspaper chain based in Davenport, Iowa. "It's okay to preach," he says, "but first you've got to fill the church."

At its most extreme, the *Telegraph's* effort to attract readers meant short stories about crime and celebrities with loud headlines such as MANSON PLOTS ESCAPE and DID HILL STREET'S LT. HUNTER DIE? "One day we were very local," recalls Vernon E. Henry, the paper's executive editor at the time, "and the next we were taking every bizarre story off the wire and running it on page one. We were a more sanitized version of the *New York Post*."

Circulation and market penetration did increase at first, Henry says, but not dramatically and not permanently. Worse, readers began to complain and Henry's visits to the local Rotary club, among others, became increasingly uncomfortable.

Last August, company president Rowley (who declined to be interviewed for this article) did an about-face and turned the *Telegraph* back into a hometown paper. He



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hired a new executive editor, Greta Sherman, who describes herself as a "community journalist." "The Murdoch concept won't work here," she says, adding that it doesn't meet the needs of the community. Much of her time since her arrival, says Sherman, has been spent in the community apologizing for the paper. "I tell them, 'We made a mistake. We're sorry for what we did to your newspaper.'"

Today, the *Telegraph's* focus is almost entirely local. A recent front page contains articles about the building of a local marina, the settlement of a tractor accident in which a Painesville man was killed, a drop in local joblessness, a city council debate about condo trash collection, and local sales of

Cabbage Patch doll imitations. "Your *LOCAL NEWS*paper," proclaims a line under the masthead, and across the full back page a house ad promises, "If it's special to you . . . it's local news to us." Meanwhile, national and international news is compressed into a few columns in the back pages of the paper.

Schwartz remains skeptical. "During the years of the paper's greatest decline, it was a locally oriented paper," he points out, adding that the *Telegraph* never fully committed itself to his program.

No official circulation figures have come out since the change, but executive editor Sherman says the paper is gaining 154 subscribers a week.

Whatever happens to circulation, Sherman says, the emphasis on local news will continue. This past December the *Telegraph* and three small sister dailies in Ohio were sold to Tri-County Newspapers, a chain based in Woodbury, New Jersey, and the new owners, according to Sherman, are committed to a community approach.

But habits die hard. The same month the sale went through, the *Telegraph* ran a front-page photo of two young women wrestling in a vat of rigatoni and sauce. This time, however, the stunt was a fund-raiser for the local little league.

Bill Doll

Bill Doll is an attorney and writer who lives in Cleveland.

State-of-the-art criticism

Paper Tiger Television — a public access show on New York's Manhattan Cable — has received many honors since its 1981 inception. Alternative and video publications across the country and even in Japan have praised the low-budget program, calling it cogent, funny, and courageous. And in a month-long installation beginning last Jan-

uary, New York's Whitney Museum paid the half-hour show perhaps the ultimate compliment, calling it art.

Each Wednesday night at 8:30, *Paper Tiger* offers a unique brand of media criticism as one of the show's stable of leftist academics and free-lance critics takes on a single publication. Its targets have included

Museum piece: An installation at New York's Whitney Museum last January featured the work of a public-access TV program devoted to demystifying the "information industry."



The Washington Post, *Time*, *Ebony*, *Vogue*, *The National Enquirer*, *Variety*, and "the steering mechanism of the system," *The New York Times*, which was given a six-part going-over.

The look of *Paper Tiger* may best be described as cultivated funk. Each critic reads from his or her publication against a backdrop that offers a whimsical tie-in to the analysis. On one show, for example, journalist Elayne Rapping reads and critiques romance novels while slides of laundromat interiors are flashed on the wall behind her. In another, professor Brian Winston picks apart *TV Guide* while a woman in an easy chair sits before a television set and dozes. *Paper Tiger's* sets are haphazard and its production values loose. (An average episode costs about \$200.) Often the camera will swing around to capture members of the crew testing sound, fiddling with gaffer's tape, shuffling props, or simply drinking coffee.

But while an air of fun and amiability infuses the show, *Paper Tiger's* message is serious. "Investigation into the corporate structures of the media and critical analysis of their content can be a way to demystify the information industry," the show's introduction solemnly declares. "Developing a critical consciousness about communication is necessary to regain cultural pluralism and democratic control of information resources." In practice, such dogma translates into charges that *Rolling Stone* is "the trade journal of the star-fucking industry," that *The Washington Post* Style section avoids addressing real issues by "painting the mood without ever coming to a judgment," and that the Sunday *New York Times* is a reflection of "a society which lives and runs on waste." When reviewing a left-leaning publication such as the CIA-busting *Covert Action Information Bulletin*, on the other hand,

C.R./Harvey Wang

Paper Tiger shifts from mordant criticism to warm approval.

At the Whitney, *Paper Tiger* episodes played on four video monitors and a large newsstand displayed dozens of publications, some of them doctored. In addition, one of the gallery's walls was entirely covered with pages from the Sunday *New York Times* and a surreal portrait of a generic board of directors formed by a collage of the faces of publishers and media magnates from around the country. Whitney film and video curator John Hanhardt, who has been following *Paper Tiger* for about three years, says that he was attracted not so much by its politics as by its interpretation of media and its creative use of television. "I'm interested in media that take as their subject the subject of the media themselves," he says. "I liked the show's humor and its independence of the mainstream information industry."

"There's a lot of romanticism about journalists in this country, some of it is even justified," says Dee Dee Halleck, one of *Paper Tiger*'s originators. "But it's important to keep in mind the big picture. Most people have a reverent attitude toward *The New York Times*. But you've got to remember that something like seven of their thirteen board members sit on the boards of large military contractors. We want people to keep in mind just who decides what news is fit to print."

Halleck has been involved in public-access and independent film and video production for years. Like the other fifteen members of the *Paper Tiger* crew, which includes a soap-opera actress, a cameraman for Japanese TV, and a Harlem public school teacher, she receives no salary from the show. "One of the reasons we do the show," Halleck says, "is that we just like to get together."

After four years, *Paper Tiger* appears to be catching on. A station in Minneapolis recently bought fifty episodes, the show can now be seen on cable systems in California, Wisconsin, and upstate New York, and video-cassette sales have increased. In addition, Halleck says that she would like to offer the show by satellite.

Does she worry that the show's political bias could limit its potential audience? "The whole equal-time philosophy is really, I think, a bugaboo of liberalism that I don't subscribe to," she says. "If we try to tell everyone's viewpoint, we end up telling no one's. We're just trying to light our little candle in the dark."

Laurie Winer

Laurie Winer is a free-lance writer who lives in Brooklyn.

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CAPITAL LETTER

by TOM McNICHOL

End-running the networks

Last October, while many candidates in Washington were jockeying for a few precious seconds of pre-election coverage on the network news, Vice-President George Bush chose a different messenger to deliver his pitch to the country's electorate. The vice-president was ushered into the modest Capitol Hill studio of Storer Communications, which was linked by satellite to six local Storer TV stations and two local Jefferson-Pilot stations. At the other end of the satellite link, news anchors in Milwaukee, Toledo, Cleveland, and elsewhere waited for their turn to interview Bush for five minutes. Fifty minutes later, Bush unclipped his microphone and left the studio knowing that his interviews would be featured prominently on local newscasts in eight television markets.

Four years ago, Bush wouldn't have bothered to look beyond the major networks for coverage, especially during the crucial weeks shortly before the election. But of late, national candidates in general, and the president in particular, have been taking notice of the newest and fastest-growing player on the Washington media scene — the local television bureaus. Thanks to the growing accessibility of satellite technology, the number of local television news bureaus in Washington has risen from about fifteen in 1980 to more than fifty today. In theory, a bureau can be launched with little or no start-up capital. A crew can be hired to do a story that has been sold in advance to several stations, with the cost passed along to the buyers.

While all of the local bureaus are in the business of wringing local angles out of Washington stories, they are not all bound by the same rules. Large operations like Storer, Cox, and Gannett represent company-owned stations across

the country and generally work closely with local news directors in developing stories. Smaller independent bureaus cover many of the same events, but generally spend an equal amount of time on the telephone "selling" stories and trying to add new client stations to their service. The growth of the bureaus comes at a time when many local stations are steadily increasing their coverage of national and international news and, in particular, events from Washington that affect their viewers. Since the networks can't offer custom-made Washington stories, stations are signing up with in-

sure you have someone representing you in Washington."

While most bureau chiefs tout their services as "the next best thing to having your own man in Washington," local stations usually don't bother to make the distinction when they air stories generated by an independent bureau. Reporters for the bureaus are usually presented as the station's exclusive Washington representative, even though the same reporter may appear on the screen in a dozen different cities. At the end of a story, the bureau reporter may rattle off as many as eight station sign-offs. He may even affix the station's call letters to his microphone for a custom look. Lately, local anchors have also become involved with national stories, conducting interviews with Washington newsmakers by satellite. The Local Program Network (LPN), a spin-off of WCCO-TV in Minneapolis, recently launched a service called "1 on 1 Exclusive," which arranges interviews with the president, cabinet members, and other prominent figures at a Washington studio. Last July, when President Reagan appeared on the network's first trial run, six local stations jumped at the chance to have their news anchor interview the president. The motives behind the response were not lost on LPN, which ran a two-page ad several weeks later in trade publications. Above a picture of the president, the ad read, "Every anchor talks about him. Ours talk to him."

"No longer," says LPN's director, Jim Hayden, "do we at the local level have to rely on the national press to interpret Washington news for us." According to Hayden, the nearly two dozen stations that have so far signed up with LPN say that the networks are not equipped to give them the sort of Washington coverage they need to stay competitive. LPN, says Hayden, is part of a "megatrend" toward decentralization in

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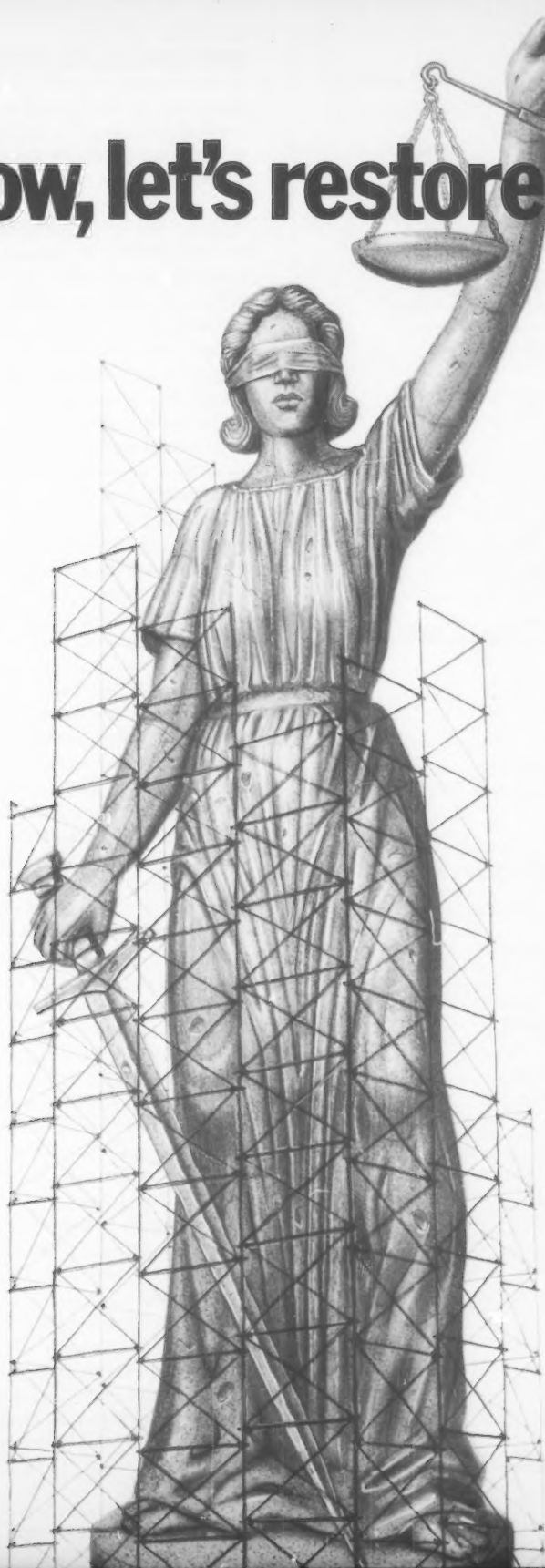


dependent Washington bureaus in record numbers. In fact, affiliation with a local bureau in Washington is quickly becoming the barometer by which the seriousness of a station's news commitment is measured.

"It's like it was a few years ago when everyone was buying a helicopter for the news department," says Bruce Finland, president of Potomac News, Inc., the largest independent local bureau in Washington. "Now, if you're serious about national news coverage, you make

Tom McNichol is a staff writer for The Washington Weekly.

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CAPITAL LETTER

the news business, providing stations an alternative to the networks' homogenized national news. "Unlike the networks, we're allowing regional differences to flourish and to affect how a story is handled," says Hayden. "I think that the national media are a little insecure about that because national news was once their domain."

The rise of the Washington bureaus has raised questions as to whether local anchors are as qualified to ask tough questions of national figures as are members of the national press corps, who report on them every day. In addition, some bureau reporters are concerned that local stations too often settle for soft features with a local angle. The White House, which often complains that network news stories are too negative, has been especially responsive to the needs of the local stations. The White House Office of Media Relations, headed by Sue Mathis, a former reporter for Cox Communications, works closely with nearly all of the Washington bureaus and even does some advance work for them. "We do everything we can to please the local broadcasting companies," says Ann Brackbill, a staff assistant in the White House office. "And it's not all puff pieces," she volunteers. "We've set up interviews with cabinet secretaries to talk about the budget process."

But directors of the local bureaus, while pleased that the White House has recognized their growing presence, say that most of the events they cover at the White House are, at best, marginal news stories and, at worst, like last year's Great American Family Awards and the more recent Mother of the Year presentation, orchestrated primarily for the benefit of the local bureaus. "There's a lot of puff that comes out of the White House," says Potomac News's Bruce Finland. "That goes with the territory. The president is a master at the photo opportunity. He comes across not much differently than the head of a big corporation."

"Are we being used by the White House?" asks Norman O. Wagdy, director of Storer Communications's Washington bureau. "Probably. But if the president is giving an award to a lady from Detroit for her community work, I

want to be there."

President Reagan has by no means been the only Washington player to successfully court the locals. Members of Congress, especially those up for reelection, are also turning to the bureaus as a means of delivering their message to the heartland.

Aware of the danger of being used, the larger Washington bureaus are looking to expand their beats. Gannett News Service has formed a special projects team that has covered events outside of Washington, including last summer's party conventions, the Olympics, and several state primaries. Gannett has even broken some stories for its stations — the company's Atlanta affiliate was the first in town to confirm that Representative Larry MacDonald was aboard the Korean airliner shot down over the Soviet Union. "You have to do a lot of predictable and obligatory stories in this business, so it's nice to be able to break a story once in a while," says Gannett's news director, Jack Hurley.

But many Washington bureaus, especially the independents, have neither the time nor the resources to devote to long-range stories or events outside their area. Some of the smaller locals do little more than sell news, offering dubious stories with a perfunctory local angle at cut rates. "There are a lot of snake oil salesmen in this business," admits Finland. "Some of the independents will do ridiculous things just to sell a story to a station. But I think in the long run it's just good business to do good stories."

One likely newcomer to the ranks of the "independent" locals is none other than the White House, which is currently looking into setting up a Washington studio of its own later this year. Local stations would pay for a satellite hook-up to a White House studio for interviews with cabinet members, government officials, and occasionally the president. The prospect of White House competition for the local market has some of the Washington bureaus worried.

"I'm hoping most news directors would rather have a reporter do a story than get it straight from the Republicans," says Bruce Finland. "But I'm a little worried that they'll take it because it's free."

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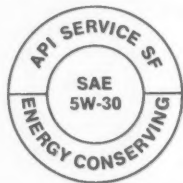
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COMMENT

The dual verdicts

Every big libel trial has two verdicts. The formal judgment determines whether the aggrieved party is entitled to damages for harm done to his reputation. The other judgment weighs the performance of the news organization and journalists involved. It inevitably emerges from the exposure, in court proceedings, of minute details of journalists' work, even their state of mind.

Such was the case with the two major libel trials that ended earlier this year, one with a jury verdict, the other on the plaintiff's initiative. Legally speaking, each news organization could claim a stand-off or better. But the informal judgment was something else.

In *Sharon v. Time*, a carefully instructed jury, considering a statement that Ariel Sharon, as Israel's defense minister, had discussed revenge with Phalangists before the 1982 massacres in Palestinian refugee camps, concluded that what *Time* had published was defamatory and false, but that the magazine had been careless rather than reckless. Thus, under First Amendment rules, *Time* owed Sharon no damages and had "won."

CBS could claim a less ambiguous victory, for at the abrupt end of a four-month trial it appeared unlikely that General William C. Westmoreland would have been able to prove to a jury that what the network had broadcast about the doctoring of estimates of enemy strength in Vietnam was false, let alone careless or reckless.

But during and after the Sharon trial, *Time* was subjected to widespread criticism, most notably in comment based on an opinion by Judge Abraham D. Sofaer. The judge found at least twenty points in *Time*'s handling of the story where, he said, the jury could have suspected that *Time* had acted recklessly in failing to do the rechecking that might have upset its supposed exclusive. Such reluctance smacks of thobbery — an old term, disinterred by the historian Alfred McClung Lee, meaning "the confident reasoning of a person who is not curious about verifying his result."

If *Time* was given to thobbery, CBS tended to hype. The presentation of "The Uncounted Enemy: A Vietnam Deception" amounted to historical oversell — the casting of an old issue of the Vietnam War as new and dramatic revelation. Moreover, documents disclosed for the trial showed that there had been internal oversell and manipulation as well, and CBS took a prolonged public beating for these shortcomings. Although the trial seemingly confirmed the general accuracy of the documentary, it did little to reverse the feeling that it was neither altogether fair nor a balanced contribution to historical understanding.

News organizations may draw some comfort from the

outcome of these two trials, inasmuch as the failure of two controversial public figures to obtain redress for criticism of their public acts may serve as a deterrent to similar ventures in the future. But what may stick in the public's mind is not so much the formal results of the trials as the questions that were raised about the nature of the defendants' journalistic practices.

Darts and laurels

Laurel: to *The Philadelphia Inquirer* and reporters Frank Greve and Ellen Warren, for a two-part report (December 16, 17) detailing charges that a secret U.S. Army helicopter unit had been sent repeatedly into hostile territory in Central America to aid pro-American forces. Based on spine-tin-gling interviews with the widows, parents, and friends of sixteen members of the task force killed in what the government describes as "noncombat" accidents in 1983, the *Inquirer* pieces prompted immediate calls in Congress for further probes into what could prove to be a violation of the War Powers Act.

Dart: to Robert C. Marsh, classical music critic of the Chicago *Sun-Times*, for marring a January 13 preview of the Chicago Symphony's European winter tour with an off-key pitch for KLM airlines ("It's my favorite way to go to Europe"). A nearby ad for a Bach gala in Germany contained a (possibly major) key: a package tour to the gala would be conducted by music critic Marsh, and would include round-trip travel via KLM.

Laurel: to the Hattiesburg, Mississippi, *American* and John Maxwell Hamilton, a public relations official at World Bank, for a creative collaboration designed to demonstrate to the *American*'s readers the economic, social, and political interconnectedness between their own small town and developing countries of the third world. Keeping the focus on farmers, businessmen, immigrants, and religious leaders in the Hattiesburg area, while showing, for example, how increased literacy in Indonesia increases sales at a local forest-products plant, or how poverty in Bolivia drives farmers there to grow crops that find their way to Hattiesburg in the form of illegal drugs, Hamilton's five-part series (beginning November 11) provides a challenging model readily adaptable to any community in the land.

Dart: to *Science Digest*, for a retrogressive effort by editor Oliver S. Moore III to position science writing in an ideal universe whose center is purely male. In a January

column titled "Redefining Science Journalism," Moore informed *SD* readers that "Science Digest is a whole new kind of men's magazine. . . . the thinking man's magazine regularly covering national issues." Lauding a number of recent articles, many of which were written and edited by women, Moore went on to exult that "male readership is up . . . , the largest percentage gain, by far, of any men's magazine."

Laurel: to *The New York Times* and reporter Philip Shenon, for a microscopic look at the on-the-job performance of New York City Chief Medical Examiner Elliot M. Gross. Based on scrutiny of official records and interviews with 250 doctors, prosecutors, defense attorneys, judges, criminologists, forensic scientists, and employees of the medical examiner's office, Shenon's four-part dissection (January 27-30) suggested a pattern of inefficiency, incompetence, inaccuracies, misleading autopsy reports, and possible cover-ups in cases involving people who died in police custody. The series prompted five separate inquiries, including an investigation of possible obstruction of justice by a federal grand jury.

Dart: to *Washington Jewish Week*, for breaking the covenant of silence observed by news organizations around the world and revealing that a secret Israeli airlift of Ethiopian Jews was under way. The weekly's December 6 front-page story triggered a barrage of publicity in mainstream media — most significantly, a page-one story on December 11 in *The New York Times* — that put the rescue operation in jeopardy and eventually brought it down.

Dart: to *The Times of Acadiana*, a weekly tabloid in Lafayette, Louisiana, for "Hot Shots," an unbylined January 10 cover story featuring the "achievers, doers, movers, dreamers" who will "make news and help chart the course of Acadiana in the new year." Among the profiled "Ten to Watch": Linda Matys, editor of *The Times*.

Dart: to Hank Greenspun, publisher of the *Las Vegas Sun*, for "Where I Stand," a pious, 650-word, front-page sermon — inspired by the meetings being held by disgruntled employees "if I leave the office for even as much as a half day" — on the virtues of keeping the newsroom staff "overworked and underpaid. . . . An ideal formula for [the paper's increasing] success." Concluding with a stern reminder to the staff that "no man has ever been drowned in sweat," the publisher flew off to Maui for a family holiday.

Laurel: to the Chicago *Sun-Times* and reporter Thomas M. Burton, for "Clout College," a first-class exposé of administrative corruption at Triton College in west suburban River Grove, the largest single-campus community college in Illinois. Based on a three-month investigation and centered on school-board chairman Pascal F. "Pat" Naples,

Burton's series (beginning November 11) revealed a mind-blowing pattern of favoritism in awarding no-bid contracts to Naples's friends and relatives and to firms having alleged ties to syndicated crime; heavy interference (including threats) in the hiring of faculty and staff; and flagrant waste of taxpayers' money on such nonsensical enterprises as cleaning and deodorizing doormats at \$12,000 a year — an assignment handled by a company owned by the manager of Naples's 1980 campaign for reelection to the board. Burton's series produced sweeping proposals for administrative reform as well as grand jury investigations into the school's bidding and contracting procedures by the U.S. attorney's office in Chicago and the FBI.

Dart: to the Dothan, Alabama, *Eagle* and "Eagle golf writer" Fred McDuffie, for "Some New Golf Rules . . .," a by-lined humor piece that bore a remarkable resemblance, paragraph-by-paragraph, to a syndicated column by Lewis Grizzard. It was easy for readers to spot the similarity: both pieces appeared in the same edition of the daily, twelve pages apart.

Dart: to *The New York Times*, for a curious reportorial oversight. Announcement of a New Jersey program to reduce drunken holiday driving by providing free bus and rail services on all its transit lines on New Year's Eve brought an editorial cheer from the *Times* (December 20), along with its strong recommendation that New York's Metropolitan Transit Authority emulate its neighbor's "life-saving" plan. When it came to reporting the numerous assaults, muggings, injuries, and thefts sustained by public transportation riders that night, however, the *Times* seems to have missed the bus: what was front-page news in the *Newark Star-Ledger*, *The Jersey Journal*, and the *Bergen County Record* — and deemed worthy of stories on the AP wire and in the *New York Daily News* — did not get even token acknowledgment from the paper that had hailed the program so vigorously only eleven days before.

Dart: to Gannett's Rochester, New York, *Sunday Democrat and Chronicle*, for rampant narcissism in judging what's news. The impulse that gave, on a single day (January 27), front-page play to three self-centered stories — a paper-sponsored high school essay contest, the retirement of a longtime editorial page editor, and Gannett's contributions to community programs — was even more discernible in a January 6 piece by publisher Vince Spezzano, in which were reprinted for posterity thirty-one selected "highlights" from his appointment book for 1984. (Sample: "September 11. To Montauk, Long Island, for a tribute to Gannett Co. Inc. deputy chairman Jack Heselden by the New York State Publishers Association. Could not land in Rochester until 3:30 a.m. because of ground fog.") ■

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WHEN THE GOVERNMENT TELLS LIES

Official deceptions, half-truths, and outright lies impose a heavy burden on the press. A veteran journalist surveys the scope of the problem — and suggests ways reporters can cope with it

by ANTHONY MARRO

NOVEMBER 25, 1957 — Dwight Eisenhower, sixty-seven years old and recently recovered from both a heart attack and abdominal surgery, is in his office. He tries to pick up a document, and can't. He tries to read it, and fails. The words, he later says, "seemed literally to run off the top of the page." He tries to get up, and nearly falls down. He tries to tell his secretary what is wrong, but she can't make any sense of what he is saying. His physician realizes almost immediately that Eisenhower has suffered some sort of a stroke.

The president has developed "a chill," the press office tells reporters. It is not until twenty-four hours later that the nation is told that its president is seriously ill.

DECEMBER 7, 1971 — Henry Kissinger is briefing the press on the government's position on the India-Pakistan war. "First of all, let's get a number of things straight," he begins. "There have been some comments that the administration is anti-Indian. This is totally inaccurate." A briefing paper has been handed out at the start of the session. The first sentence reads: "The policy of this administration towards South Asia must be understood. It is neither anti-Indian nor pro-Pakistan."

A month later, Jack Anderson publishes the transcript of a meeting attended by Kissinger on December 3, just four days before the briefing for the press. "I am getting hell every half-hour from the president that we are not being tough enough on India. . .," Kissinger is quoted as saying. "He wants to tilt in favor of Pakistan."

APRIL 22, 1980 — Jody Powell, President Carter's chief

spokesman, is talking with Jack Nelson, Washington bureau chief for the *Los Angeles Times*. No military operation is being planned to rescue the hostages in Iran, Powell tells him. A blockade might be feasible, somewhere down the road, but a rescue mission just wouldn't make any sense.

The newspapers with Nelson's story, which says that the Carter White House considers a rescue operation impractical, are still scattered around in living rooms all over Los Angeles when the members of Delta Team board airplanes for the raid on Teheran.

OCTOBER 24, 1983 — Larry Speakes, the White House spokesman, is asked by reporters whether U.S. troops have landed on Grenada. He checks with a member of President Reagan's national security staff, and relays the response. "Preposterous," he says, and goes on to deny that any invasion is planned.

The landing takes place the next day.

For starters, Stephen Hess probably is right. The Brookings Institution scholar, who has studied both Washington reporters and government press operations, says that most government spokespersons don't like to lie. For one thing, telling the truth is official U.S. government policy. For another, they prefer telling the truth. To lie, he says, is to "fail to play fair with reporters and the public, to diminish their self-esteem, and to complicate their work."

Anthony Marro, managing editor of Newsday, was a Washington correspondent for ten years.



White House reporters wait for news on Ike's health (above), then run to call in their stories.



both: UPI/Bettmann

'The president [Eisenhower] has developed "a chill," the press office tells reporters. Not until twenty-four hours later is the nation told that its president is seriously ill'

But complications and crises are of the essence of government, and trying to put the best face on a sensitive situation also is part of the job. Political posturing, face-saving, honest error, bad judgment, and legitimate national security concerns also play a role, and so, to different degrees in different administrations, do arrogance, deceit, disregard for the public, high-handedness, and attempts to cover up stupidity and criminal conduct. The result is that reporters have come to accept some level of deception as part of the routine, and to expect, as Hess delicately phrases it, "less than full candor" on the part of their government.

In fact, Washington reporters over the years have had to deal with a steady barrage of deceptions, half-truths, and outright lies — deceptions about national security operations that were so sensitive that they probably wouldn't have published the information even if they had been able to obtain it, and deceptions so petty that they wondered why anyone would bother to lie in the first place.

There was the time in 1960 when Lincoln White tried to explain away the crash of the U-2 airplane in the Soviet Union. It had been on a weather mission and had just strayed off course, the State Department's chief spokesman said. "Now, our assumption is that the [pilot] blacked out. There was absolutely no — N-O, no — deliberate attempt to violate Soviet air space. There never has been." Within days it became clear that the pilot, Francis Gary Powers, was alive, that the Soviets had him, and that he was talking. The principal attachment to the airplane was not a thermometer but a camera, and its mission was not weather reconnaissance but spying.

There was the time in 1966 that Lyndon Johnson claimed that one of his great-great-grandfathers had died at the Alamo (not true), and the time in 1971 that the White House claimed that Tricia Nixon's wedding cake had been based

on an old family recipe (it apparently had been created by a White House chef).

There was the time in 1975 when FBI Director Clarence Kelley said that while there had been some warrantless break-ins by FBI agents in the past, they had been confined by and large to foreign espionage and counterintelligence matters, and had been ended by J. Edgar Hoover in 1966. In truth, there had been thousands, all of them illegal, most of them against American citizens, many of them against people never charged with any crime, and some as recently as 1972. Kelley's aides were left to explain that the head of the nation's most sophisticated police agency had been misinformed.

There was the time in 1954 when Henry Cabot Lodge, ambassador to the UN, described fighting in Guatemala as "a revolt of Guatemalans against Guatemalans," despite the fact the uprising was being orchestrated, in large part, by Frank Wisner, the deputy director for plans for the CIA. There was the time in 1981 when the Reagan administration released a white paper on Central America that attributed authorship of key documents to several guerrilla leaders who clearly had not written them. There was the time, during the Bay of Pigs invasion, when the government lied in saying that the bombings were being conducted by defectors from Castro's own air force, and then, when reporters discovered the lie, groused because the reporters did not create lies of their own to help protect the government's lie.

There was the time in a televised debate last October when President Reagan insisted that more people were receiving food stamps than ever before (actually the number had dropped by about 400,000 since he had become president), and when Walter Mondale claimed that Reagan had sought to "terminate" a housing program for the elderly (in fact, the Reagan administration had made major cuts in the program, but hadn't tried to abolish it).

There was the time that John Mitchell, the former attorney general, was indicted for lying about Watergate, the time that Richard Helms, the former head of the CIA, was indicted for lying about Chile, and the time that Rita Lavelle, a former official with the Environmental Protection Agency, was indicted for lying about the EPA's handling of toxic waste.

There was the time that Ron Nessen, President Ford's press secretary, began a response to a question by saying "To tell you the truth . . ." only to be overwhelmed by sarcastic applause.

The manifold forms of deception

I. F. Stone has said that "Every government is run by liars, and nothing they say should be believed."

James Deakin, who covered the White House for many years for the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, pretty much agreed with Stone, but worded it differently. "Every government is run by people who seek to wield and retain power," he wrote in *Straight Stuff*, his brilliantly witty book on Washington journalism. "To do this, they must convince the public of certain things: That their policies are correct. That their facts and explanations should be accepted. That they are in control of events and situations. That sounds nicer

[than Stone]. And it comes out at the same place."

To achieve these things, it's necessary not only for governments to deceive, but also to hype, slant, tilt, and gloss over, trying at the same time to present a situation in its most favorable light, while hiding, or hedging on, or deflecting reporters away from any information that might conflict with its version. Indeed, Stephen Hess has written, "It is hard to find a discussion of modern government's relations with the press that does not include the words 'manage,' 'manipulate,' and 'control.'"

It probably is a fool's errand to try to measure degrees of deception from one administration to the next, or to try to show whether Democrats are more or less deceptive than Republicans. Clearly, much misinformation was produced by the Reagan administration during its first four years, on such matters as the invasion of Grenada, revolution in Central America, its concern for the handicapped, and its commitment to civil rights. But there is no way of assessing how it compares with, or whether it's even in the same league with, the massive amounts of misinformation put out by the Johnson administration during the Vietnam War, for example, or by the Nixon administration during the Watergate years.

For one thing, it often takes years for deceptions to surface. It took congressional hearings, criminal prosecutions, and serious reporting by people like Nicholas Horrock and John Crewdson, both then working for *The New York Times*, to expose the degree to which the FBI had been staging illegal break-ins against American citizens. And even in 1985, fifteen years after the fact, we were still learning in the libel trial of General Westmoreland against CBS about the degree to which key officials in the Johnson administration knew that, despite their public statements to the contrary, there wasn't any light at the end of the tunnel.

'Kelley said warrantless break-ins by FBI agents had been largely confined to foreign espionage. In truth, there had been thousands, most against American citizens'

Clarence Kelley being sworn in as director of the FBI in 1973



For another thing, there is the question of degree, and the issue of whether, and at what point, numerous small deceptions begin to equal major ones.

There was a time, early in the Reagan administration, when the president's aides argued that it didn't matter whether some of his stories were literally true — his numerous misstatements of fact, his confusion about detail, and his repeated anecdotes about supposed welfare cheats that no one was ever able to confirm, for example — because they contained a larger truth.

"We've been dealing with four years of an administration that freely states — and stated early — that literal truth was not a concern," says Bill Kovach, the Washington news editor of *The New York Times*. "This is the first time I've heard that literal truth is not important to the presidency."

There also is the matter of attitude. "This administration is much more arrogant with the press," says one career government official who has served through several administrations. "The attitude is, 'Screw you, we don't need you. The Reagan administration is going to be successful despite the editorials in *The Washington Post* and *The New York Times*, and the cartoons in the *Los Angeles Times*.'" "

And Morton Halperin, the director of the left-leaning Center for National Security Studies, says that many key officials in the Reagan administration have a philosophy of government that doesn't include public discussion and debate. "These guys came here straight out of nineteen forty-six," he says. "They came out of World War Two, when the government lied all the time, and it was all right to lie. The whole Normandy invasion, and the covert operations that surrounded it, are an important part of that mind-set. . . . They still think fundamentally that foreign policy should be left to the executive branch and that people shouldn't even try to find out what they're up to."

Deceptions by government officials take many forms, and it's not always easy to show what they amount to. They can include simple face-saving, such as Geraldine Ferraro claiming she felt "vindicated" by a House report critical of her failure to disclose her husband's financial interests, and routine political posturing, such as the White House announcing full support for people like Anne Burford and James Watt, when both had clearly become major liabilities and were on their way out of the government. And there is the endless, predictable attempt by administrations to portray themselves in the best light, as Reagan did in a speech to the National Council of Negro Women in July 1983. "We have authorized for filing three school desegregation cases, more than were authorized by the previous administration during its first thirty months in office," he said.

At first blush, this looks like a simple statement of fact. But when James Nathan Miller took a look at the numbers, he concluded in an article in *The Atlantic* on Reagan's civil rights record that "This seemingly straightforward twenty-four-word sentence contains three carefully crafted semantic deceptions."

To begin with, Reagan's administration hadn't actually filed more cases than Carter's. His Justice Department had

filed only one, while Carter's had filed two. Secondly, while Reagan seemed to be saying that he had filed more cases, he hadn't really said that. What he had said was that his administration had *authorized* that the suits be filed. And thirdly, while he implied that he was talking about his record and Carter's on the same terms, in truth he was using an apples and oranges comparison of legal suits his people had authorized (but not yet acted on), with suits that Carter actually had taken to court.

The fact that it took Miller about twelve hours' worth of digging just to deal with that one sentence gives some notion of the problem at hand.

The Reagan twist — and John Mitchell's maxim

The problem, in the view of many, is very real, not necessarily because face-saving and political posturing are outrageous in themselves, but because a pattern of routine and systematic deception has very real costs, both in terms of loss of confidence by people in their government, and in terms of citizens not learning until it is too late just what it is that their government is up to. And while it is not clear that the Reagan administration is any more duplicitous than others, it unquestionably has gone well beyond other recent administrations in its attempts to bottle up information, to prevent public access to government officials and records, to threaten and intimidate the bureaucracy in order to dry up sources of information, and to prevent the press and the public from learning how their government is functioning.

This goes well beyond just shielding the president from questions (Reagan has had fewer official news conferences than any president in modern times), and doing silly things like revving up the helicopters while he's getting ready to leave for Camp David, so that reporters won't be able to make themselves heard over the din. The administration's proposals for limiting the Freedom of Information Act, censoring the public statements of government officials even

'Many citizens actually were shocked to to learn at the time of the U-2 incident that their government would tell such a lie'

U-2 pilot Francis Gary Powers testifying before the Senate Armed Services Committee in 1962



after they leave office, and using polygraphs to search out people who talk to the press all have the effect of restricting access to information, and of making it harder for reporters to report on the way Reagan is running the government.

Jack Landau, who heads the Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press, goes so far as to say that such actions by the Reagan administration constitute the greatest restrictions on public access to government information since World War II. There is no question but that the Reagan administration is seeking restrictions and kinds of censorship in peacetime that Eisenhower, Kennedy, Johnson, and even Richard Nixon didn't ask for in times of war.

There is a temptation to shrug that politicians have always lied and that the Republic nonetheless has survived. But David Wise, in *The Politics of Lying*, argues that to dwell on historical examples of lying is to miss the point entirely, because it was only in the 1960s that government deception came to be *perceived* by large numbers of citizens. Many actually were shocked to learn at the time of the U-2 incident that their government would tell such a lie. And once large numbers of people come to distrust their government, he says, a new political environment is created in which the president can no longer assume that most people believe what he says.

According to Wise, a former bureau chief for the *New York Herald Tribune*, this is a dangerous situation in a society in which the government is supposed to operate with the consent of the governed. Indeed, writing in 1972, he termed the erosion of confidence between people and government — an erosion that was documented by University of Michigan studies — “perhaps the single most significant political development in America in the past decade.”

Wise laid much of the blame for this erosion on official deception, and he in turn laid the blame for much of the deception on the growth of the nation's intelligence-gathering agencies since World War II. Once the government began running covert operations it had to have cover stories to hide them, and that required government-sanctioned lies. The chief criterion thus was not truth, but just the opposite — developing lies that would be plausible enough to be accepted as truth. “Thus the standard is not truth,” Wise wrote, “but fashioning lies that will be believed.”

Sissela Bok, in *Lying: Moral Choice in Public and Private Life*, argues that it is dangerous to let public officials get away with even minor lies, or lies that they feel are for the public good. “Some come to believe that any lie can be told so long as they can convince themselves that people will be better off in the long run,” she writes. “From there, it is a short step to the conclusion that, even if people will not be better off from a particular lie, they will benefit by all maneuvers to keep the right people in office. Once public servants lose their bearings in this way, all the shabby deceptions of Watergate — the fake telegrams, the erased tapes, the elaborate cover-ups, the bribing of witnesses to make them lie, the televised pleas for trust — become possible.”

And Jody Powell, President Carter's press secretary and a man who admits to at least one lie that he still believes was in the national interest, argues that while there are long-range problems for a democracy if people don't trust their

Defense Department spokesman Arthur Sylvester (below) at a press conference on the 1962 Cuban missile crisis; and (right) President Kennedy conferring with his cabinet and advisers during the crisis



both: UPI/Bettmann

'It is not known who first argued that the government has a right to lie to its citizens, but the person who touched off the greatest furor by saying it was Arthur Sylvester'

government, there can be more immediate consequences, too. "An administration that has a reputation for being not credible, for evoking 'national security' to cover political embarrassments and things that don't involve any real national security matters at all, that sort of administration is going to have a harder time protecting national security secrets when there's a need," he said in a recent interview. In short, if reporters come to distrust an administration's officials, they won't believe them even when the matter is serious and the officials are telling the truth.

All three — a former journalist, an academic, and a former press secretary — would argue that it is important that the press not shrug off lies as just part of the routine, but must, instead, set out aggressively to expose them, and to hold officials accountable for them. The reason is not just to expose deceptions for the sake of exposure (although Bok, more than the others, would argue that this is an important goal in itself), but to make it possible for people to know how their government is working.

To this end, the best piece of advice for reporters was offered by John Mitchell, the former attorney general and no particular friend of the press. His words: "Watch what we do instead of what we say." In truth, he wasn't talking to reporters at the time (he was talking with a group of people concerned about the direction of civil rights law enforcement under Nixon), and he never did much to help reporters learn what his department was doing. But sorting out the difference between what a person, or a government, is saying and doing is at the heart of reporting, and central to the role of the press in a democracy. Among other things, this means getting access to information about the process, about alternatives that were debated and discarded, about how a decision came to be made, and about all the predicted results of the decision, not just those that the government sees fit to release.

This also means being able to report on the decision-making process while it is still under way, and while it is possible to show what the alternatives are. On this point,

Deakin says, the press is very much like Lyndon Johnson, who when he was Senate majority leader used to complain to the White House that Congress wanted to be "in on the takeoffs as well as the crash landings."

Letting the public in on the takeoffs means telling it what an administration really is up to — whether it really has a commitment to enforcement of civil rights laws, whether it really is providing a "safety net" for the helpless, and how far it really is prepared to go in trying to prop up allies in Central America, for example — and what the likely consequence of its actions will be. And the single biggest complaint of many reporters now working in Washington is not just that the government has deceived them in major ways, but that it has taken unprecedented moves to try to prevent them from getting behind the deceptions.

Does government have a 'right to lie'?

It is not known who first argued that the government has a right to lie to its citizens, but the person who touched off the greatest furor by saying it was Arthur Sylvester, a Defense Department spokesman during the Kennedy administration. On December 6, 1962, during a dinner meeting of the New York chapter of Sigma Delta Chi, Sylvester was asked by Jack Fox of UPI what he thought about half-truths and deceptions by government spokesmen.

This was in the aftermath of the Cuban missile crisis of October 1962, and many reporters were still fuming about some of the misinformation that had been released during the crisis. For one thing, Kennedy had cut short a political trip to Chicago, and had rushed back to Washington to deal with the evidence that the Soviets had placed offensive missiles in Cuba. Instead of telling the nation that a major confrontation with the Soviets was brewing, however, Kennedy's aides explained the sudden return to the capital by saying that the president had come down with a cold.

Later in that same week, with tensions rising and questions flying thick and fast, Sylvester had authorized a press release from the Pentagon that read: "A Pentagon spokes-

man denied tonight that any alert has been ordered or that any emergency military measures have been set in motion against Communist-ruled Cuba. Further, the spokesman said, the Pentagon has no information indicating the presence of offensive weapons in Cuba."

The first sentence may have been technically correct. The second was false, a government-planted lie at a time when Kennedy had made the decision to confront Khrushchev, but before all the strategy for the confrontation had been worked out.

In authorizing the release, Sylvester later said, he had come down on the side of the "Lying Baptists" and against the "Truthful Baptists." His reference was to a dispute between two groups of Baptists that had erupted at Long Run, Kentucky, back in 1804. The issue was whether a man with three children who had been captured by marauding Indians was justified in lying to the Indians in order to conceal the fact that a fourth child was hiding nearby. The "Lying Baptists" argued that the father had the right to lie, and thus save the child. The "Truthful Baptists" disagreed, saying that, no matter what the consequences, the truth should be told.

This is a philosophical and ethical debate that far predates Arthur Sylvester, the Cuban missile crisis, or even the 1804 dispute among the Baptists of Long Run, Kentucky. Discussing a similar hypothetical situation, albeit one without Indians or the possibility of nuclear holocaust, Immanuel Kant argued that truthfulness cannot be avoided by any person, no matter how serious "may be the disadvantage accruing to himself or another." Samuel Johnson's view was more in line with that of the "Lying Baptists" and Sylvester. "The general rule is, that truth should never be violated; there must, however, be some exception," he said. "If, for instance, a murderer should ask you which way a man has gone."

Others have argued that the key question is whether the person seeking the information — a murderer in Sam Johnson's London or a Miami resident who suddenly has Soviet missiles aimed at him, for example — has any right to it. At what point did the American people have a right to know that their president was wrestling with a major crisis, not just a cold, and that Soviet missiles had been placed in Cuba?

Sylvester's argument was that the stakes were so high that deception, both of the Soviets and of the American people, was necessary, at least until the president had decided on his next move.

Jack Fox, in his story for UPI, gave what Sylvester later said was a fair summary of his statement at the Sigma Delta Chi dinner. "He [Sylvester] said that the government must not put out false information, but later added, 'I think the inherent right of the government to lie to save itself when faced with nuclear disaster is basic,'" Fox wrote.

Others made more of the "right to lie" part of the statement and less of the caveats, to the point where Sylvester, in an article written for *The Washington Star* in 1967, complained that they had "distorted my remarks beyond recognition, howling that they were proof that the government was not to be believed, under any circumstances."

"He got a raw deal on that," Hess said recently. "It's always been taken out of context, as though he said the government has a right to lie, period. He said a lot more than that."

In his article in the *Star*, Sylvester said that as assistant secretary of defense for public affairs he had always taken the position that the prime requisite for a government information program was that it be truthful. And he went on to argue that it was totally wrong for any press aide to lie for personal or political reasons.

Many press secretaries would agree. There is considerable evidence to back up Hess's contention that most of them don't like to lie, not just because it makes them feel bad — Lincoln White, who lied about the U-2 flight in 1960, later told Patrick Sloyan, then working for UPI, that it was "my darkest moment" — but because credibility is important to their job. To be effective, a press aide not only has to be able to generate favorable stories, but has to be able to stop bad ones. And a press aide who isn't trusted will have a whole lot more trouble trying to head off a bad story than one who is trusted. "All you need is one lie, and five years of credibility goes right down the drain," says Homer Boynton, who acted as chief spokesman for the FBI from 1973 until 1980. "So when you're giving it out, you goddamn better be right."

Sylvester's statement touched off an angry debate at the time. But the fact is that many reporters and editors agree with it, at least in principle. Philip Geyelin, for example, complained in a recent article in *The Washington Post* that the Reagan administration seemed to be squandering its credibility with a pattern of deception in its statements about Central America. But he began the piece by saying, "We will get nowhere without first stipulating that, while circumstances alter almost any case you can think of, the president has an inherent right — perhaps even an obligation in particular situations — to deceive." And he went on to argue that, when it comes to troop movements and placement of weapons, a certain ambiguity of purpose is, as John Foster Dulles used to say, "a necessary art."

Bill Kovach, who runs *The New York Times's* Washington bureau, says that, "as a rational human being, I'd have to say yes, if lives really are at stake. But [the occasions] should be so few and far between that we talk about them for years. And it's better for [press aides] to try to avoid answering the question than to give out real misinformation, because the next time they won't be believed."

Even Jack Landau, the head of the Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press and one of the most vocal advocates of the public's right to know, says that in some legitimate national security cases "I would guess . . . [lying] would be all right." And Jack Nelson, who was lied to by Jody Powell during the Iran hostage crisis, also thinks there are times when a government can justify some forms of deception. "I didn't like being lied to. I didn't like being used. But I didn't have a great deal of problem with [Powell's] doing it," he says. "If it was a real matter of life and death, and he thought it was, I can't argue with what he did."

What Powell did was to tell Nelson flat-out that there was no chance that a rescue mission would be launched in the near future — a lie that Powell still argues was proper, given the circumstances. At the time he told the lie the preparations for the raid were well under way, and in less than forty-eight hours the U.S. planes would be entering Iranian air space. Not only was he fearful that a story suggesting a raid was possible would alert the Iranians, but he felt that a flat statement to the contrary would “reinforce the web of deception” that had been constructed to protect the mission.

In *The Other Side of the Story*, his book on his years as President Carter’s press secretary, Powell argues that there are two reasons why the government can, and sometimes should, lie. The first is that the “government has a legitimate right to secrecy in certain matters because the welfare of the nation requires it.” The second is that the press, for the most part, has a right to print what it knows. Freedom of the press is so important to democracy, he says, that when there is a conflict with legitimate national security needs, it is probably better for the government to simply lie to the press than to try to limit it, censor it, or restrict it through prior restraint.

But Powell admits to at least one other lie that had nothing to do with national security or life-and-death matters. It was a question that, as Powell put it, “involved the personal life of a colleague and that of his family.” Powell says he decided to lie because to respond with the truth would have resulted in “great pain and embarrassment for a number of perfectly innocent people.” And, besides, he didn’t think that the matter was of any legitimate public interest to begin with. Powell thus goes a step beyond Sylvester, and argues that it is sometimes permissible for a government to lie to protect the privacy of public figures, as well as to protect the security of the nation.

Powell, now a Washington columnist, says he has come to understand more clearly than he used to why it is that “journalists get so damn skeptical about what people [in

government] tell them.” He says he has no doubts at all that he acted properly in the Iran situation, but has mixed feelings about the second lie. “That’s harder to defend without getting into the details, which I won’t do,” he says, adding that he would probably lie again in that situation, too.

“The minimal line you can draw there is that you can absolutely say that lying to cover up your own embarrassments is not permissible,” says Powell. “Once you get past that, you get into areas where, unfortunately, things tend to be mixed. Then you have to weigh in the sort of long-term impact, not just in terms of the credibility of a particular administration, but the credibility of the government over the long haul. If you contribute to the idea that people can’t believe anything their government tells them, that’s awful. It’s also dangerous.”

In his book, Powell cites other cases in which he thinks a government sometimes might have a right to lie, including protection of intelligence sources and methods, protection of an innocent person whose name had cropped up during a Justice Department investigation, and a pending decision by the Treasury Department that could have major financial consequences to individuals and to the nation.

And it is here that he runs into conflict with many others, including Hess, who argue that there is a big difference between lying to protect legitimate national security matters and lying to protect anything less. “It’s very easy to slop over into other areas . . . and I’m less sympathetic when it does,” says Hess. “Just because something might concern the ‘public good,’ that isn’t enough” to justify government lying. “It has to be to save lives, as in the Iranian hostage thing, or similar wartime activities.”

But while many people in government and in the media agree that, in some circumstances, the government has a right to lie, they also agree that the people have a right to know what their government is really up to. And they argue that a chief reason that the government gets away with as much deception as it does is that the press, for all of its

‘What Powell did was to tell Jack Nelson [of the *Los Angeles Times*] flat-out that there was no chance that a rescue mission would be launched in the near future’



Press secretary Jody Powell, and (left) charred bodies and smashed aircraft left behind after the attempt to free hostages in Iran

'The "objective reporting" standards of the day held that if a senator was going to make charges of treason, espionage, and communists in high places, that in itself was news'

Reporters question Senator Joseph McCarthy during 1954 hearings



bluster and all its professed skepticism, is far too willing to take the government at its word.

Sylvester, for example, placed much of the blame for misinformation about government activities on the laziness and ineptitude of reporters, saying that they relied too much on handouts and failed to ask the right questions. "Every sophisticated [reporter] knows the federal government puts its best, not its worst, foot forward . . .," he said. "That being so, it is [the reporter's] function to penetrate this protective coloration behind which all men attempt to mask their errors. If there is a credibility gap, it measures the failure of newsmen to do their job."

This is a charge that not only was valid when it was made, and remains so today, but also had been a particular matter of controversy just a decade before, when Joe McCarthy was at the height of his influence and there was much debate within the media over the lengths to which reporters should go to try to unmask deception and lies.

Joe McCarthy: testing the limits of 'objective reporting'

To understand the controversy that surrounded McCarthy and the press, it is necessary to understand not just that many of the charges by the Wisconsin senator were considered by many reporters to be reckless, but also that the press in the early 1950s was very different from what it is today. There was much less analysis and interpretative reporting in news sections (analysis and most forms of comment being reserved for the editorial pages), and almost none was provided by the wire services. The "objective reporting" standards of the day held that if a U.S. senator was going to make charges of treason, espionage, and communists in high places, that in itself was news, and it wasn't necessarily the job of a reporter to determine the validity of the charges, or to hold the senator accountable for them.

"We let Joe get away with murder, reporting it as he said it, not doing the kind of critical analysis we'd do today," William Theis, a former reporter for International News Service, told Edwin Bayley, whose book *Joe McCarthy and the Press* analyzes the coverage and finds much of it lacking. George Reedy, who covered McCarthy for United Press and later became a press secretary to Lyndon

Johnson, told Bayley that his frustration at trying to cope with McCarthy's charges was a major consideration in his decision to quit newspaper work. "We had to take what McCarthy said at face value," he told Bayley. "Joe couldn't find a communist in Red Square — he didn't know Karl Marx from Groucho — but he was a United States senator. . . . It was a shattering experience, and I couldn't stand it."

As McCarthy's influence grew, the debate over how to cover him and his charges grew also. Much of the debate was over the nature of "objective" reporting, but the debate itself tended to be partisan in the extreme. Editors and publishers who approved of McCarthy tended to argue that they wanted his statements reported as they were made, without heavy doses of analysis or perspective. And they, in turn, put pressure on the wire services, which provided the bulk of the daily coverage, to report the charges in a straightforward way.

Others, including many who disapproved of McCarthy's politics as well as his tactics, argued that reporters who simply wrote down what he said, along with the subsequent rebuttals and denials, were playing into his hands, because they were not addressing the large number of inconsistencies and proven inaccuracies that marked his attacks on supposed communists.

Some papers developed strategies specifically for McCarthy. *The Milwaukee Journal*, for example, began adding bracketed inserts to stories about McCarthy's charges, using the brackets to add explanatory information. Here is an excerpt from a May 8, 1950, article about McCarthy and Owen Lattimore, whom the senator had accused of helping to shape foreign policy to the benefit of communist governments:

McCarthy said that Lattimore has "long been referred to as the architect of the State Department's Asiatic policy."

[State Department officials and three former secretaries of state have denied that Lattimore played any part in forming policy.]

The Young Republicans guffawed as McCarthy joked about "individuals with peculiar mental aberrations as far as sex is concerned."

[The individual referred to by Mr. McCarthy here is no longer in government service.]

According to Bayley, this got to the point where, in September 1952, the *Journal* had bracketed thirteen inches' worth of such inserts into a fifty-two-inch story. "McCarthy's tactics produced lasting changes in the media," Bayley observes in his book. "Newspaper people realized that it was not enough simply to tell what had happened and what was said, but that they had to tell what it meant and whether or not it was true. By 1954, interpretative reporting and news analysis had become standard practice; these functions were no longer left to the editorial writers."

And these devices were to become more important in the following decades, not just because of the massive amounts of misinformation released by the government during Vietnam and Watergate, but because, as Wise argues effectively in *The Politics of Lying*, cover stories and deception became a significant part of government operations.

Four kinds of lies — and the problems they pose for the press

Not all deceptions are equal, of course. There is a big difference between a Joe McCarthy making harsh, and often groundless, charges of treason, and the sort of political posturing that causes a president to defend an aide who has done something dumb. After several years of studying the press-government relationship from both sides, Hess has concluded that some reporters tolerate, even welcome, minor deceptions, because exposing deceptions helps them to display their skills. While studying the State Department press operations during Reagan's first term, he says, he found many examples of deception, most of them minor, and didn't detect much outrage on the part of the reporters there. "It is only the Big Lie, the deliberate and consistent pattern of misstatement on a matter of importance, that turns Washington reporters into inflamed civil libertarians," Hess writes in *The Government/Press Connection*.

Hess cites four broad categories of government deceptions. On a scale of decreasing acceptability to the press, he says, are so-called "honest lies," inadvertent lies, half-truths (which include many forms of political posturing and selective release of data), and flat-out lies. An "honest lie," for Hess, is a legitimate national security matter, such as Powell lying about the raid on Teheran. Even if they don't approve of such a lie, most reporters can understand the need for it, he says.

Reporters also tend to forgive inadvertent lies, because they know from their own work that mistakes happen when things are done in a hurry. Bill Beecher, a former Defense Department information officer and now a reporter for *The Boston Globe*, has said that "half the initial internal reporting within government in a crisis is wrong."

It is with half-truths, a specialty at the State Department, that some reporters begin to get resentful. The chief technique here is for a press officer to define the question as narrowly as possible and then answer it that way. Here are two examples Hess cites in *The Government/Press Connection*. Both, he said in an interview, are real examples, with the facts altered just slightly "to protect the guilty."

Q — Has the assistant secretary of state been invited to China?

A — No. (Meaning: He will go to China as an adviser to the vice president. It is the vice president who has been invited. Therefore, I am not lying. Rationale: I have to say this because protocol requires that the Chinese must first publicly extend the invitation.)

Q — Will the ambassador-at-large go to Egypt?

A — No decision has been made. (Meaning: A "decision" is made when the Secretary of State signs the cable. The cable will be signed tomorrow. Therefore, I am not lying. Rationale: I do not have the authority to give a premature confirmation.)

In the Reagan administration, examples of all four types of deception can be found in the invasion of Grenada. Larry Speakes himself may not have known that he was telling a lie when he said that it was "preposterous" to think U.S. forces had invaded, and that no invasion would take place. But Rear Admiral John Poindexter, who told Speakes it was preposterous, knew that the landing would take place the next day, and kept Speakes and other press aides in the dark about it. Speakes did not respond to a request for an interview, but Hess and Powell and a number of the journalists interviewed for this article argued that, even if he had known and then told the lie, it might have been justifiable.

The initial claim by the government that there were no civilian casualties appears to have been inadvertent. The Pentagon says that it didn't know about the bombing of a mental hospital by a Navy plane (at least seventeen persons were killed) until several days after it occurred, and no one has yet proven otherwise.

The claim by the administration that leaders of other Caribbean countries urged it to take action appears to be in the nature of a half-truth. The administration said that the urging from other leaders came after the assassination of

'The inflation of the number of Cubans in Grenada was part of the data used to argue that a Cuban takeover was at hand and that "We got there just in time"'

Cuban prisoners captured by the U.S.-led Grenada invasion force



UPI/Bettmann

Maurice Bishop, the Marxist prime minister of Grenada, on October 19. But Stuart Taylor, Jr., in a lengthy piece in *The New York Times* on some of the misinformation put out by the U.S. government during and immediately after the invasion, quotes the prime minister of Barbados as saying that U.S. officials had been talking about possible action at least as early as October 15, four days before the killing.

And while it's hard to determine whether the government was telling an outright lie when it said it had prevented reporters from accompanying the troops because of concern for the safety of the journalists, subsequent comments by Secretary of State George Shultz seem to give some sense of the real reason for the ban. "These days, in the advocacy journalism that's been adopted, it seems as though the reporters are always against us and so they're always trying to screw things up," he said. "And when you're trying to conduct a military operation, you don't need that."

It is difficult to know whether some of the most important misinformation was deliberate or inadvertent because the degree of the deception depends on whether there was any intent to deceive. Reagan, in a television speech to the nation, said there were an estimated 400 to 600 Cubans on the island, and that they were "a military force," rather than construction workers. The next day, Admiral Wesley L. McDonald said that captured documents showed that there were at least 1,100 Cubans on Grenada, and that they were all "well-trained professional soldiers."

Eventually, the State Department said that the Cuban government's own figure probably was right — that there had been 784 Cubans on the island. Still later, U.S. military authorities on Grenada said that, after interrogating them, they had concluded that most of the Cubans really had been construction workers, and that only about 100 had been combatants. "Thus, over three days the Pentagon estimate of the number of Cuban fighters who had met the invading force seems to have plunged from more than 1,000 to fewer than 200, including the estimated 30 to 70 Cubans who were killed," Taylor wrote.

What difference does it make whether there were 784 Cubans on Grenada or 1,100, and whether they were "well-trained professional soldiers," as Admiral McDonald insisted, or construction workers, as the Cuban government claimed? One answer, of course, is that one version suggests an attempt to take over a country and perhaps export revolution (which the Reagan administration said was the case), while the other version suggests that Cuba might only have been providing economic aid to a government that it considered an ally.

The inflation of the number of Cubans, and the initial characterization of them as a military force, was a part of the data that were used by the Reagan administration to argue that a Cuban takeover was at hand, that American students were in danger, and that, as many newspapers repeated in their headlines, "We got there just in time."

Grenada also highlighted a major problem in trying to counter deception and misinformation. The president was able to give his version on national television, to a huge audience, and was backed up by carefully selected and edited television film clips. The challenges to the official version came over a period of days and weeks, and they were fragmented and uncoordinated. One paper would challenge one statement, a second paper would challenge a second one, and a television report would challenge a third. A large number of Americans heard the president say, "We got there just in time." But it was only in a disjointed and scattershot way, over a period of weeks following the invasion, that the press raised the two immediate and obvious questions, neither of them yet fully answered.

Did we?

In time for what?

This issue arose again during the presidential campaign, when George Bush claimed in his television debate with Geraldine Ferraro that Mondale had said that the American Marines who had died in the bombing of the embassy in Beirut had died in "shame." Mondale denied this, and pressed Bush for a retraction. And in the process Peter Teeley, Bush's press secretary, brought the whole problem into focus.

"You can say anything you want in a debate, and eighty million people hear it," he told reporters. "If reporters then document that a candidate spoke untruthfully, so what? Maybe two hundred people read it, or two thousand or twenty thousand."

Which makes the point that, particularly in the television age, reporters need to be aggressive in documenting and pointing out deceptions, half-truths, and outright lies, unless governments and officials are going to be allowed to lie with impunity.

How some journalists cope with official misinformation

There are some kinds of misinformation that quickly become apparent on their own. For example, there was Tricia Nixon's wedding cake. According to the White House, it had been based on a recipe for old-fashioned pound cake, a



UPI/Bettmann

"You can say anything you want in a debate and 80 million people hear it," Bush's press secretary said. "If reporters then document that a candidate spoke untruthfully, so what? Maybe 200 people read it"

George Bush during his October 1984 debate with Geraldine Ferraro



Tricia Nixon and Edward Finch Cox cutting their wedding cake

'The whole wedding cake episode suggested that a White House that would put out misinformation about a recipe probably couldn't be expected to tell the truth about the war in Cambodia. Which it didn't'

favorite of Tricia's, that had been in Mrs. Nixon's recipe box for years. But when the White House released a recipe for the wedding cake, scaled back down to family size, there was a problem. Housewives and amateur cooks all over the country, including food writers for several newspapers and magazines, rushed to test it. The result in many cases was a porridge-like glob that overflowed the baking pans and messed up the ovens.

When asked for an explanation, the White House first said there must have been a miscalculation in the attempt to scale down the recipe. There was hemming and hawing when it was suggested that the White House should simply produce the original recipe, from Mrs. Nixon's recipe box. There was bobbing and weaving when it was noted that most recipes for pound cake call for whole eggs (this one called only for the whites), while the White House chef was quoted as saying that his pastry chef had gotten the recipe, "where I don't know." This in itself was of no great import, except that the whole episode suggested that a White House that would put out misinformation about the origins of a cake recipe probably couldn't be expected to tell the truth about the war in Cambodia. Which it didn't.

It's not possible to test all government statements as easily as a cake recipe, of course. Some deceptions are so major and so long-running and so tightly held that it takes the combination of Congress, the courts, and the media, working over a period of years, to unravel them. But Patrick Sloyan, a Washington reporter for two decades and now *Newsday's* London bureau chief, argues that basic reporting, common sense, and "simple math on a pocket calculator can often deflate the biggest government lies."

One of the easiest and most obvious ways to challenge official statements is simply to go to the opposition. When Reagan claimed that his administration had made "great progress" in its efforts to protect the environment, Francis X. Clines, of *The New York Times*, made clear that officials of some of the nation's leading environmental groups didn't know whether to laugh or cry at the statement. For specifics, he went to Representative James L. Florio of New Jersey, who noted that of 22,000 hazardous waste sites identified by the EPA, only six had been cleaned up by the Reagan administration in four years, and that even as the president was trumpeting his record on the environment, he was opposing proposals in Congress to combat acid rain.

Many such claims are more a matter of opinion than fact, of course, and going to the other side is a first lesson of journalism. But some of the most basic kinds of reporting can be used to provide a second, often different, view of events and issues. And in covering an administration that works as hard as Reagan's does to control and shape the information being released, basic reporting is particularly important.

Go to the scene: During the invasion of Grenada, Reagan and the Pentagon camera crews combined to show American television viewers warehouses on the island that seemingly were stacked to the rafters with automatic weapons. The president said there were enough of them to "supply thousands of terrorists." But when reporters themselves got to the sites they found some of the warehouses half-empty, some of them stacked with cases of sardines, and many of the weapons antiquated, possibly more suited for defense by an island militia than for the export of terrorism and revolution.

Go to the people affected: The Reagan administration insisted that its changes in the Social Security Disability law were intended only to get rid of people who had no right to the government aid in the first place. The people being removed, it said, were able-bodied people who had managed to slip through loopholes and get themselves into the program because of lax monitoring and ambiguous standards. But it turned out that a third of a million persons, including many with serious physical handicaps and mental disorders, had been cut off from the payments in a massive purge of the rolls, often on the basis of reviews of their health records by doctors who had never examined them in person.

Here is how Bob Wyrick and Patrick Owens of *Newsday* began a series that grew out of a months-long study of persons whose benefits had been taken away:

"Lyle Ely was blind in one eye and had tunnel vision in the other. He could not, as he complained in one of the many forms he filled out in the last years of his life, see well enough to read, drive a car, or watch television. His partial blindness, along with the convulsive seizures that also plagued him, was caused by a tumor that grew to the size of a large orange in the front part of his brain. But claims examiners and reviewing physicians who had never seen him found him well enough to work, cancelled his Social Security disability pension, and reaffirmed the cancellation when Ely applied for reconsideration."



'In covering an administration that works as hard as Reagan's does to control and shape the information being released, basic reporting is particularly important'

*President Reagan
at a 1982 White House
press conference*

Go to the documents: In February 1981, the State Department issued a white paper on El Salvador, which it said "presents definitive evidence of the clandestine military support given by the Soviet Union, Cuba, and their Communist allies to the Marxist-Leninist guerrillas now fighting to overthrow the established government of El Salvador." It said that the evidence was drawn from captured guerrilla documents and war material, and had been "corroborated by intelligence reports."

The white paper was accepted by much of the nation's press, was used by State Department officials to drum up support in Europe for Reagan's Central America policy, and was used on the Hill by White House lobbyists to persuade Congress that more funds were needed to help counter the outside aid being given to Salvadoran guerrillas. But when Jonathan Kwitney of *The Wall Street Journal* began a study of the documents a few months later, and went back to the people who had drafted the white paper, he found the evidence something less than it had been made out to be.

"Several of the most important documents, it's obvious, were attributed to guerrilla leaders who didn't write them. And it's unknown who did," he wrote in the *Journal*. "Statistics of armament shipments into El Salvador, supposedly drawn directly from the documents, were extrapolated . . . and in questionable ways, it seems. Much information in the white paper can't be found in the documents at all. This information now is attributed by the State Department to other, still-secret sources."

Kwitney's article did not totally discredit the conclusion of the white paper, which was that some weapons and supplies were being sent to the rebels by communist governments overseas. But it made clear that the evidence cited by the State Department, which had been accepted at face value by much of the press, wasn't as clear or as precise or as unambiguous as the government had claimed.

So, too, with Grenada. Admiral McDonald said on October 28 that captured documents showed that "341 more officers and 4,000 more reservists" had been scheduled to arrive from Cuba as part of a plan for "the Cubans to come in and take over the island. . . ." But Stuart Taylor of *The New York Times* reported that the captured documents, when

finally released, showed an agreement by the Soviet Union and North Korea to provide Grenada with \$37 million worth of equipment; the only reference to more Cuban soldiers was a promise by the Cubans to provide twenty-seven military advisers to train Grenadian troops.

A senior Pentagon official was quoted by Taylor as saying that McDonald had been mistaken about the 4,341 additional troops — they were to have been Grenadians, not Cubans. And he went on to report that "there is no evidence . . . that the Cubans had planned to take over Grenada either in the documents released Friday or in any other materials made public by the administration."

Check the numbers: When James Nathan Miller set out to examine Reagan's civil rights record, he went to the data that Reagan himself had used to illustrate what he termed "our unbending commitment" to civil rights. What Miller found were not outright lies — he did not once use the word "lie" in his *Atlantic* article — but a selective use of information that told only a part of the story. For example, Reagan had touted the fact that his Justice Department had reviewed 25,000 proposed changes in the Voting Rights Act, and had vetoed 165 of them because it felt they would be discriminatory. When Miller looked at the actual record, however, he found that the veto of 165 proposed changes was not an unusually strong enforcement of the law but a dramatic reduction in the rate of objections. From 1965 until Reagan took office, the department had vetoed 2.4 out of every 100 proposed changes it had examined. But the figures that Reagan cited amounted to a veto rate of .7 per 100 — a decrease of 71 percent.

Again, in a speech to the American Bar Association, Reagan said that in his first thirty months in office the Justice Department had filed more than a hundred cases charging criminal violations of citizens' civil rights. This, he said, was not just a respectable number, but was "substantially more than any prior administration during a comparable period."

In terms of *criminal* cases, the Reagan administration actually was ahead of where the Carter administration was after the first thirty months. Reagan's Justice Department

had filed 114 criminal cases, while Carter's had filed 101. But the civil law has been a potent weapon for civil rights in recent decades, and when the number of *civil* cases was added, the Reagan administration fell well behind the record of the Carter administration at thirty months — a total of 225 civil and criminal suits filed by Carter, and only 156 filed by Reagan.

"Almost every one of the major points I made in the article was being made for the first time," Miller says. "The people in the daily press, even those covering civil rights, had simply printed the statements without any serious attempt to check their validity."

The need for a more aggressive press

It is not necessary to challenge every statistic to make a point, and readers of most major newspapers have been told repeatedly that the Reagan administration has a philosophy about enforcement of civil rights laws that is very different from that of most recent administrations. But Miller nonetheless has a point when he says that for reporters to accept such numbers on their face is to allow themselves and their readers to be manipulated and deceived.

The challenge is likely to become greater as Reagan, immensely popular and recently swept back into office by a landslide, moves ahead with his stated goals for limiting the flow of information to the public. Already, his administration has supported bills that would exempt the Secret Service, the CIA, and most FBI activities from the Freedom of Information Act, and has imposed a rule at the Defense Department that any person with access to classified information must submit to lie detector tests whenever asked to. It has reversed the Carter administration policy and now allows the FBI and CIA to infiltrate the media if the attorney general finds it in the interest of the national security to do so, and has set regulations that allow the FBI to infiltrate and monitor domestic groups, including the press, while conducting investigations of organized crime or terrorism. It has slashed the budget of the indexing staff of the National Archives, meaning that access to historical records, including the Nixon tapes, will be delayed for years. It has created mechanisms for monitoring contacts between White House staffers and reporters, and has issued guidelines telling officials handling FOIA requests to be stingy in giving fee reductions to journalists, scholars, and authors. It has rewritten the classification system to insure that more, rather than less, information will be classified. And it has made proposals — already implemented in some agencies — that would require all officials who have had access to classified information to come back to the government for the rest of their lives and submit for prior censorship any speeches, letters to the editor, news articles, or works of fiction.

Nick Horrock, of *Newsweek*, who has worked in Washington for most of the past two decades, says that some of the changes are atmospheric, and not entirely caused by Reagan. "There has been a shift back to an atmosphere much more like it was in the early 1960s," Horrock says. "During the Vietnam War and Watergate, a lot of dissidents

were in the government, and they were quick to speak out, to tell reporters that things weren't working the way they should. Now, there aren't so many dissidents. It's not popular to take risks. Being a whistle-blower is no longer popular."

In a recent article, William Greider, the former assistant managing editor for national news at *The Washington Post* and now national editor of *Rolling Stone* magazine, argued that the press, too, seems to be in retreat. "It seems to be pulling in its lances, taking fewer risks, avoiding the hard and nasty confrontations it would have zealously pursued five or ten years ago . . .," he wrote. "The trend I see is deep and subtle — a shift toward 'hard news,' which means narrow splinters of unexamined fact, a turning away from more provocative explorations of subjects that have not been legitimized by official sources."

If he's right, and many in the media agree that he is, it is happening at a particularly bad time. The history of the press-government relationship since World War II shows that administrations have claimed a right to lie in some circumstances, and have been unable to resist the temptation to deceive in a great many others. And this particular administration, headed by a tremendously popular president, has made clear that it wants to make information about government operations harder to get, and, in terms of threats to their careers, more dangerous for civil servants to provide.

That means that the press needs to be even more aggressive, not less, if it is to follow the John Mitchell rule for covering government: Don't watch what we say. Watch what we do.

'The press needs to be more aggressive if it is to follow the John Mitchell rule for covering government: Don't watch what we say. Watch what we do'

Attorney General John Mitchell appearing before a Senate subcommittee in 1971



UPI/Bettmann

Is Lyndon LaRouche using *your* name?

How the LaRouchians masquerade as journalists to gain information

by PATRICIA LYNCH

Last fall, presidential candidate Lyndon H. LaRouche, Jr., suffered a double defeat at the hands of a federal jury in Alexandria, Virginia. His \$150 million libel suit against NBC — which had aired two reports that charged, among other things, that LaRouche was the leader of a violence-prone, anti-Semitic cult that smeared its opponents and sued its critics — was rejected. Perhaps more significant, the jury ordered LaRouche to pay \$3 million to NBC on the network's counterclaim that LaRouche and his followers had played "dirty tricks" on the network and had interfered with its newsgathering activities by, for example, impersonating NBC reporters and producers. While this was by no means the first time that the LaRouchians, as his followers are commonly called, had been detected posing as reporters and members of TV camera crews, it was the first time that a jury had weighed the evidence regarding such activities and imposed punitive damages on LaRouche. (LaRouche has appealed the libel verdict in *LaRouche v. NBC*, and has moved to set aside the counterclaim.)

As I testified at the trial, my first encounter with LaRouchian dirty tricks occurred on January 30, 1984. As the producer of a report on LaRouche for NBC's now-defunct *First Camera* program, I was filming LaRouche's residence in Leesburg, Virginia. While correspondent Mark Nykanen was doing a "stand up," my associate producer, Kathleen Paterno, and I saw one of LaRouche's security guards reach through the window of our crew car, remove our work schedule from the dashboard, read it, return it, then stroll away. Later that afternoon, back in Washington, Paterno was telephoned by a man representing himself as an aide of New York Senator Daniel P. Moynihan,

whom we were scheduled to interview at 5:00 P.M. The caller said that the senator was having "second thoughts" about doing the interview because he and his family had been subjected to harassment by LaRouchians in the past. Half an hour later the "aide" called back, raising questions about how thorough our report would be. Had we talked to the FBI, the CIA, the IRS? Paterno and I assured him that we had. After this call, Paterno looked worried. The man we had just spoken to, she said, sounded very different from the one with whom she had set up the appointment. I called Senator Moynihan's office and, to my surprise, learned that the interview had been cancelled by someone purporting to be from NBC.

The interview was rescheduled for 5:30 P.M. When I and my associates arrived at Moynihan's office, the senator

showed me a press release that had just arrived from LaRouche's political organization, the National Democratic Policy Committee. It stated: "Fat [sic] Lynch to interview Moynihan today" — information that could only have been obtained from the work schedule perused by the security guard. (The videotape of this interview was admitted into evidence at the Virginia trial and portions of it were played for the jury.)

After the interview I called an NBC lawyer in New York. *NBC Nightly News* was airing a report that evening on LaRouche and the lawyers were facing problems of their own. They had received a hand-delivered letter from LaRouche's lawyer in Boston threatening legal action if the network aired its segment that night and went ahead with its plan to air the longer report I was preparing, which was scheduled to be

Leader LaRouche and guarded estate: LaRouche, shown here speaking in a 1982 NBC interview, lives in Leesburg, Virginia. Guards are reportedly armed; security on the estate is strict.



Patricia Lynch is a producer at NBC News.

James A. Parcell, The Washington Post

shown on March 4. The letter contained a good deal of information that reflected knowledge of what Paterno and I had told "Senator Moynihan's aide" earlier that afternoon. (This letter was also introduced as evidence at the trial.)

This use of a bogus phone call to elicit information that the LaRouchians could use for ends of their own reminded me of what Sara Fritz had told me earlier that week in a taped interview. Fritz, who was then White House correspondent for *US News & World Report* and who now covers Congress for the *Los Angeles Times*, had told me how in 1981 a LaRouchian woman had impersonated her to obtain important interviews, which then appeared under that woman's by-line in various LaRouche publications. *US News & World Report* sued and won an injunction against the offending publications. I suggested to our lawyers that, should LaRouche follow through on his threat to sue NBC, the network should countersue — which is what happened.

(Asked for comment about the practices described in this article, LaRouche replied through an aide that he would speak only about the *US News & World Report* case. What he said was: "I don't know anything about it and I never looked into it, but I do know that the liberal press uses undercover press practices that are abhorrent and beneath description.")

From January 30 on, several people who had served as sources for my *First Camera* report began to receive strange phone calls. One was Lynn Cutler, vice-chair of the Democratic National Committee. Her caller identified himself as "Scott Lewis," my researcher. "Lewis" told her that I was concerned that NBC was "slanting" my story by suppressing information about the Reagan administration's links to LaRouche. Cutler believes that the imposter was trying to get her to file a complaint against the network for biased news reporting so as "to create problems for the Republicans and the Democrats."

A few days later, Cutler received another phone call, which she found vaguely menacing since the caller seemed to have inside information about her daily schedule. "We know you are going to be interviewed by Pat Lynch," the caller said, and then hung up.

(LaRouche and his followers have targeted prominent Democrats for harassment and vilification for several years, although LaRouche himself is at least nominally a Democrat. Portions of videotapes showing LaRouchian harassment of Mondale, which I had obtained for my broadcast, were played for the federal jury.)

Another source of mine contacted by the LaRouchians was Ken Paff, national organizer for Teamsters for a Democratic Union, a reform group that has often been smeared by LaRouche publications. Once again the caller claimed to work for me. He said he needed to know more about the tactics LaRouche organizations used to discredit the TDU. Paff says that he provided the caller with some information but was suspicious. In this case, apparently, the LaRouchians were simply fishing for information about the scope of my report.

A third source was Ken Lawrence, a Mississippi-based authority on extremist groups of the far right. Lawrence confesses, ruefully, to having been completely "taken in" by a caller who claimed to be "Rick Winslow, who works for NBC and the program *First Camera*." "Winslow" wanted information about LaRouche's ties to various right-wing groups in the South, as well as information about anti-Klan activists. Eager to be of help, Lawrence gave "Winslow" the names of several sources, some of them very sensitive, as well as a good deal of background information.

Still another of my sources was Lenny Zeskind, a Missouri-based expert on the far right. Zeskind, who says he has been pestered by LaRouchians for years, was suspicious almost from the start when, in February of last year, he received a call from a man who claimed to be my boss. This fictitious executive producer confided to Zeskind that I had become "a worry" as a result of the libel threat, adding that my work was often marred by inaccuracies. Zeskind played along with the man, who went on to call my journalistic ethics into question by asking Zeskind — a source, not a contracted researcher — whether he had been paid yet for his services. (NBC guidelines prohibit paying sources for information.) "Prepare a bill," the caller urged after learning that Zeskind had not been paid.

(A few days later Zeskind informed me of this curious conversation.)

The thoroughness with which the LaRouchians pursued their tactics was impressive. Gerry Gable, for example, is chairman of the London-based company that publishes *Searchlight*, an investigative monthly that focuses on the activities of extreme right-wing groups; Shimon Samuels is the director of the Anti-Defamation League's European office in Paris. Gable says that, starting in March 1984, he received a number of calls from "Pat Lynch of NBC," asking for the names of contacts who could help her do a follow-up piece on LaRouche and his anti-Semitism. One name Gable provided was that of Shimon Samuels, who subsequently received calls from "Pat Lynch." (It was when this caller asked Gable for contacts in the U.S. that his suspicion was aroused. As he said in a sworn affidavit: "I thought this was rather strange as she is an American correspondent for an American television network who . . . presumably had more than adequate sources of her own in America.")

Many other journalists have found themselves the victims of LaRouchian trickery, the purpose of which in most instances is to make people reveal information they would not normally divulge or to gain access to people who might not speak to a LaRouchian. According to several defectors from LaRouche organizations, much of the gossip and information that is either published or sold to foreign intelligence agencies or passed on to high-level U.S. bureaucrats and intelligence officials for political reasons is gained by interviews in which the caller poses as a journalist. The results are sometimes striking. Dr. Norman Bailey, who until December 1983 was a special assistant to the president and the National Security Council's senior director of international economic affairs, has called the LaRouche operation "one of the best private intelligence services in the world." (Asked on my *First Camera* program if LaRouche had any influence on President Reagan or on his policymakers, Bailey replied: "Well, I think that some people other than myself used him before and continue to use his organization

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Far left, far right — far out

Over the years, Lyndon LaRouche, who is sixty-two, would appear to have moved from the political left to the political right. Conservative publisher John Rees is one observer who thinks LaRouche has merely disguised his political beliefs to gain adherents and power. In a videotaped interview that was shown at the trial, Rees called LaRouche "a roast-beef Nazi: brown on the outside, red on the inside."

LaRouche certainly started out on the left. In 1948, he joined the Trotskyist Socialist Workers Party and adopted the name of Lyn Marcus, said by some to be a play on the names of Lenin and Marx. In the mid-1960s, he formed a group of his own, the New York Labor Committee, which became a faction of Students for a Democratic Society and played a part in the 1968 student uprising at Columbia University. Splitting off from the SDS, the group took a new

Presidential candidate LaRouche: *He has run three times, on three different tickets.*



Wade World

name — the National Caucus of Labor Committees — and preached the demise of capitalism. The name stuck; LaRouche's tactics changed.

In 1973, still claiming to be a leftist, LaRouche launched a campaign "to finish off the Communist Party." It was called Operation Mop-Up and it was violent. Squads of NCLC members beat up Communist Party activists, many of whom required hospital treatment. By the mid-1970s LaRouche's move to the right was well under way. In 1976, when conservative Republicans were voicing their contempt for Nelson Rockefeller, LaRouche discovered that he had "allies in the capitalist classes." It was in this period that he and his followers reportedly established ties with such right-wing groups as the Ku Klux Klan and Willis Carto's Liberty Lobby. Some LaRouchians underwent paramilitary training. Anti-Semitic rhetoric began to appear in LaRouche's publications.

Nineteen seventy-six was the year LaRouche made his first bid for the presidency. He ran on the U.S. Labor Party ticket. Four years later he ran as a Democrat. In 1984, after losing out in the primaries as a Democrat, he ran as an independent — and became much more visible than in the past. Candidate LaRouche obtained a total of more than \$1 million in Federal Election Commission matching funds for the 1980 and 1984 campaigns. (His 1984 vote total was 78,773). Defectors from LaRouche organizations and experts who monitor the organizations' activities estimate that LaRouche and the NCLC may have spent as much as \$20 million during the campaign year of 1984. The candidate kicked off his TV campaign in January 1984 with a \$210,000 Saturday-night political commercial; the party subsequently purchased several half-hours of prime-time television.

LaRouche presently has about 450 hard-core followers in this country and some 600 abroad. In the past four years, his political beliefs have won him many more, if less fanatically committed, followers. This new constituency, sources say, includes farmers, union members,

businessmen, clergy, legislators and government officials, and some law enforcement officers and intelligence buffs. While the National Democratic Policy Committee works to promote LaRouche's political ideas — these include a return to the gold standard, low interest rates, and rapid development of nuclear power and "Star Wars" technology — such groups as the Fusion Energy Foundation help to recruit new members attracted by its pro-nuclear stance and, in some cases, ignorant of other aspects of LaRouche's operation. Among the various groups here and abroad that draw new members are: the International Caucus of Labor Committees; the Schiller Institute, ostensibly set up to promote German-American unity; the Lafayette Foundation for the Arts and Sciences; and the Club of Life, an international political organization that started up as an anti-environmentalist and anti-population-control group.

Where does all the money come from? At trial, LaRouche claimed to know nothing about his organizations' financial activities. Some of the money comes from donations, some from the sale of intelligence reports to foreign countries. And some of the money comes from the sale of publications. Among them are *Executive Intelligence Review*, a weekly that costs \$399 a year; *Investigative Leads*, a newsletter sent to police chiefs and members of law enforcement agencies; *New Solidarity*, the LaRouche newspaper, which comes out twice a week; and *The Campaigner*, a monthly theoretical journal. The Fusion Energy Foundation also publishes a glossy monthly, *Fusion*.

The NCLC also operates a book publishing company (the New Benjamin Franklin Publishing House), a commercial typesetting firm (World Composition Services), and a printing company (PMR). Another printing plant is being built, in Leesburg, Virginia.

Last fall, during the libel trial of *Lyndon LaRouche v. NBC*, LaRouche was asked about his financial empire. He replied, in part, "I have not made a purchase of anything greater than a five-dollar haircut in the last ten years," adding that he hadn't filed an income tax return for twelve years. P.L.

as a source of information, yes.")

Among the journalists who report having had unpleasant experiences with the LaRouchians are:

□ Free-lance journalist Dan E. Moldea. Moldea is the author of *The Hoffa Wars*, a critical look at the Teamsters Union, with which the LaRouche organization reportedly has close ties. In 1981, Moldea recalls, he was called by a "journalist" whom he was led to believe worked for *Time* magazine. On the basis of this belief, he provided the caller with quite specific information about "organized crime ties to members of the Reagan administration." Later, Moldea says, "that interview appeared word for word in a LaRouche publication."

□ John Rees, an ultraconservative who publishes *Information Digest* (where the charge was first made that the nuclear-freeze movement was orchestrated by the KGB). Rees says that he provided the names of several law-enforcement contacts, as well as background information about terrorism, to callers he later concluded must have been LaRouchians. "They would call and say they represented the International Press Service at the National Press Building," Rees recalls. "It sounded so authentic. Anyone would be fooled." (Rees is one of scores of Americans who, according to the LaRouchians, have links to the KGB.)

□ Arnaud deBorchgrave, a former senior editor and chief correspondent at *Newsweek*; the co-author of *The Spike*, among other books; and a partner, with Rees, in the publication of a confidential intelligence newsletter called *Early Warning*. For several years, deBorchgrave says, he has been the victim of bogus phone calls which he attributes to the LaRouchians. (LaRouche publications routinely call him "a KGB agent of influence.") Recently, deBorchgrave says, he received a call from a woman who claimed she worked for the Rand Corporation. "She was seeking information on the Bulgarian-KGB connection in the attempted assassination of the pope," he recalls. When he invited her to come to Washington and show her credentials, adding that he believed she was a LaRouchian, she hung up. Later, he says, several people representing themselves as Arnaud deBorchgrave used the name as an entrée "all over the



Arnaud deBorchgrave, author



Mark Arax, formerly with the Baltimore Sun, now with the Los Angeles Times

world." And, for years, he adds, someone has been running up large bills in his name in France — a piece of intelligence passed on to deBorchgrave by the French police.

□ Ed Kayatt, publisher of a New York weekly called *Our Town*. "In 1979," Kayatt says, "I gave out background information on a hard-hitting series we did about LaRouche to a man who said he was counsel for *The New York Times*." When Kayatt tried to reach the lawyer at the *Times* he learned that, while the *Times* did employ a lawyer whose name was that used by the caller, the lawyer had not telephoned Kayatt. "I have no doubt it was a LaRouchie who tricked me," says Kayatt, who had been twice sued, unsuccessfully, by LaRouche and his followers for \$85 million.

□ Jerome Watson, White House correspondent for the Chicago *Sun-Times*. Watson succeeded in tracking down the caller who impersonated him. He says that Hal Levy, then press secretary for Senator Adlai Stevenson III, received a phone call from "Jerome Watson" around 1979. "Levy knew my voice so he called me right away," Watson recalls. "I called the number the imposter gave Levy and asked for myself. A man picked up and said, 'Hi, I'm Jerome Watson.' 'No, you're not,' I told him,

'Several journalists report having had unpleasant experiences with the LaRouchians'



John Rees, publisher of *Information Digest*



Jerome Watson, Chicago *Sun-Times*

and he hung up." Watson traced the number to a LaRouche organization.

Sometimes the Larouchians' tactics can damage a journalist's career. Free-lance journalist Charles Fager is a case in point. He became a target of the LaRouchians, he says, while he was preparing an article about LaRouche for Boston's *The Real Paper* in the early 1970s. Fager believes that a combination of physical and legal threats caused the paper to spike his article. Then, around 1980, by which time he was working for Congressman Paul McCloskey of California, he began receiving what turned out to be bogus phone calls. One caller identified himself as a researcher for a think tank that was seeking information about LaRouche; another identified himself as a reporter for Allied Features "with offices in the National Press Building." Fager says that soon after he had given these callers information both about LaRouche and about himself, a "dossier" labeling him a "KGB mole" started circulating around Capitol Hill. "It was embarrassing," says Fager. "I found myself on the defensive." An FBI investigation carried out at Fager and McCloskey's request cleared Fager, but, says Fager, who no longer works for government, the smear hurt because it made him "controversial."

Sometimes the tactics show a sophisticated sense of newsroom realities, seeking to discredit a reporter in the eyes of his editor and his sources as well. Consider the case of Mark Arax, which, like that of Charles Fager, was put before the federal jury. In 1982, Arax was doing the reporting for a series of articles critical of Lyndon LaRouche's campaign financing for the Baltimore *Evening Sun*. Arax, who is now with the *Los Angeles Times*, recalls: "My managing editor began to get telegrams and phone calls from my sources claiming that I had treated them poorly." Managing editor John M. Lemmon, who did not believe that a trusted reporter could have acted in the way described by the callers, discussed the problem with Arax. Subsequently, both reporter and editor started calling Arax's sources and discovered that, in some cases, people whose voices did not resemble Arax's had been calling his sources and speaking in an abusive manner while, in other cases, bogus sources had called Lemmon to complain of precisely such abusive behavior. "Fortunately," says Arax, "I had an editor who trusted me."

Occasionally, LaRouchian "actors" meet their victims face to face. In February 1984, Terry Dalton, state editor of the *Centre Daily Times* in State College, Pennsylvania, was visited by a LaRouche camera crew. Members of the crew implied that they worked for NBC and came into the Dalton house with cameras rolling. "I was subjected to a series of accusations and increasingly hostile questions from the man holding the microphone," Dalton recalls. (Dalton had written two stories about a local woman who had been persuaded to run for Congress as a LaRouche candidate but had withdrawn from the race.) Dalton says that the reporter, who identified himself as Stanley Ezrol, accused him of making "abusive" phone calls to the candidate, then interrogated him about why he had written "negative" stories about Lyndon LaRouche. Dalton says that the question he found most "chilling" came at the end of Ezrol's interview: "Have you ever feared for your personal safety?" Before the LaRouchians left, Dalton persuaded Ezrol to produce a business card. It bore the name of a LaRouche publication: *Executive Intelligence Review*.

One month after Dalton's encounter with the LaRouchian camera crew, Arch Puddington of the League for Industrial Democracy was ambushed by a three-person crew that arrived uninvited at his office in New York City. A woman asked why he was "undermining" LaRouche's presidential campaign. Members of the crew raised questions about his having written for *National Review*, a publication the LaRouchians detest. "They asked me whether I had participated in pot parties on [publisher] William Buckley's yacht," Puddington recalls. "Then they spent a lot of time impugning the reputation of free-lance writer Dennis King, saying he had 'low moral character' and was a member of the illegal drug lobby."

Dennis King, who has written extensively about LaRouche and his followers, has been harassed by them for six years and has been sued three times. King recalls two face-to-face encounters with LaRouchians. "A man who introduced himself as David Feingold from the AFL-CIO struck up a conversation with me on a shuttle flight down to Washington," says King, who edits *New America*, a bimonthly published by the Social Democrats, USA. After telling King that he was concerned about the LaRouche "menace," the man tried to draw him out. King later called AFL-CIO headquarters and learned that no such man worked for the organization. He was subsequently able to identify the man as a LaRouche follower named Herbert Quinde from photographs supplied by *The Hartford Courant*.

Quinde also tried to fool NBC correspondent Brian Ross and producer Bob Windrem. Using the alias Herb Kurtz — who described himself as a reporter for

the Newark, New Jersey, *Star-Ledger* — Quinde tried to find out if Ross and Windrem planned to investigate the LaRouche organization. Windrem later identified "Kurtz" as a LaRouchian — again from a newspaper photograph.

Another LaRouchian, who called himself Jean Claude Adam and sometimes identified himself as a French defense ministry official, succeeded in duping reporters from coast to coast for several years because he looked and sounded so convincing. Dennis King, who arranged to have a photographer snap Adam's picture, was able to identify him as Laurent Murawiec, a follower of LaRouche since the early 1970s. In an *Our Town* article published four years ago, King stated that at least two foreign policy experts of some distinction, accepting "Adam's" bonafides, had granted him interviews.

"These guys are great imposters," says John Greenfield, a Boise, Idaho, labor lawyer and former state chairman of the Democratic Party who was also duped by a LaRouchian. "They ought to be in show business." Greenfield's brush with the LaRouchians occurred in June 1984. One day, he recalls, he got a call from a man who identified himself as "an L.A. *Times* reporter." The caller asked him to describe his views on the party's arms control plank. The next day, says Greenfield, a LaRouchian was handing out leaflets at Boise State University that contained all the information he had given the "reporter."

Rick Shaughnessy, a reporter for the *Times-News* in Twin Falls, Idaho, tracked down the person who had distributed the leaflets. The man said his name was Don Pilson. Pilson admitted to having written the text of the leaflet but denied having impersonated a *Los Angeles Times* reporter. Asked why the LaRouchians used deception to obtain information, Pilson told Shaughnessy: "They probably would say 'Get lost' if we identified ourselves."

One former LaRouchian whom I interviewed last winter (and whose information was admitted into evidence) took a more sinister view of the practice. "We use our phones as weapons: to harass, to intimidate, to probe, to interrogate. You'd be amazed the kinds of things you learn by pretending to be someone important."

Critic — and target — Dennis King



Curran Wang

Ethiopia: feasting on famine

by WILLIAM BOOT

Throughout much of 1984, Paddy Coulter, chief spokesman for the British-based charity Oxfam, was telling all journalists who would listen that starvation had hit exceptionally hard in two drought-plagued countries — Ethiopia and Brazil. In Ethiopia, destitute families were trekking for miles to government feeding stations, which were desperately short of grain. Six million or more faced famine. In northeastern Brazil, 24 million people were suffering from the worst drought in 200 years, and many had been pushed to the very brink of survival.

"The worst off [in Brazil] are reduced to buying foods in tiny quantities," according to an Oxfam report sent to major news organizations last May. "Cooking oil, for example, may be purchased by the tablespoon from the local shop."

Suffering is, admittedly, hard to quantify, but Oxfam saw the situations in Brazil and Ethiopia as roughly comparable. Each deserved considerable press attention, especially on television, which, given the limits of human imagination, has by far the greatest impact in terms of donations for relief. When it comes to the third world, however, television news is a bit like the weather, bestowing or withholding its benefits quite arbitrarily. Thus, one catastrophic drought draws television reporters whose broadcasts attract vital donations, while another, comparable disaster is completely ignored. Fate is the editor.

So it was that Ethiopia became one of the major news stories of 1984-85, while the situation in Brazil went virtually unreported. The discrepancy in coverage owed little to considered news judgment and much to luck.

As Marcus Thompson of Oxfam put it: "Brazil lacked 'good television' — that is, people crowded together and dying like flies." In Ethiopia, on the other hand, "good television" abounded. Government feeding stations were deluged with dying children and

William Boot, a contributing editor of the Review, lives in London.

people who resembled walking skeletons. These macabre sites furnished the dramatic footage which put a human face on the tragedy for viewers in America and Western Europe.

In Brazil, the government provided aid in drought areas but there were no large feeding stations. The victims were spread over a huge area — 1,400,000 square kilometers — and were, consequently, much more difficult to film. If there's no picture, there's no story.

Coulter did manage to spark some interest in the Brazilian crisis — among British television reporters, at least. But then it rained. The hunger situation was not immediately affected — indeed, it is likely to remain desperate for years — but the parched earth had turned temporarily green — the wrong color for

THE ELECTRONIC BEAT

television to dramatize a drought. No pictures, no story.

For ministers of information in third world countries afflicted by drought, the lesson would seem to be: 1) pray that it doesn't rain at the wrong time, and 2) regard your starving people as "photo opportunities," and concentrate them in accessible places.

Unfortunately, there is no guarantee of Western coverage even when television opportunities are good. In fact, for the first half of 1984, Ethiopia got almost as little TV attention as Brazil. The route by which the Africa crisis made it to TV was full of pitfalls that delayed airing of the story. Each delay presumably postponed donations from concerned viewers and thus prevented lives from being saved.

Pitfall number one was no doubt the extreme ethnocentricity of Western TV, especially the American variety. In an October 30 dispatch about television coverage of Ethiopia, the AP noted: "Foreign news, particularly in an election year, is not a priority for the networks." That's putting it mildly.

Early in 1984, when such major issues as Senator Gary Hart's true age and a higher tax on pub beer were being played up on U.S. and British broadcasts respectively, news departments were certainly aware of the Ethiopia story. The Ethiopian government had been warning of an impending famine for over a year. The famine had been reported in many newspapers prior to the October broadcast — in five *Washington Post* articles, twelve *New York Times* pieces, and dozens of A.P. dispatches.

But as David Kline, a free-lance journalist and news producer in San Francisco, discovered, the networks were not exactly champing at the bit. In October 1983 — a full year before the story exploded on American television — Kline shot film on assignment for CBS showing emaciated adults and some children near death, one so thin that its heart could be seen beating through the chest wall. Kline was told the footage was not strong enough.

After the footage was rejected by CBS in early 1984, Kline offered to do similar stories for NBC and PBS. They both turned him down. Kline paraphrases the reaction he got from television like this: "You're offering me a story about *kids starving in Africa*? Please. That's not a story — it's like saying the sun rises in the east."

Also in early 1984, ABC's Rome correspondent, Bill Blakemoore, urged his network to send a film crew in to cover the famine, but, according to Blakemoore, the idea was rejected as too costly. The Ethiopian situation only became "strong enough" for TV months later, after mass death had set in. As Coulter put it: "Television is always too late."

By midsummer, when British television finally was drawn into the story, an estimated 7,000 Ethiopians were



Courtesy NBC News

dying each month. Even then, TV involvement owed a good deal to happenstance. A documentary crew for British Central Television had been in Ethiopia in May, filming a report on an irrigation project, when a group of cadaverous people wandered past in search of food. Shocked by the sight, the film crew traveled to a government feeding station, where it recorded horrifying scenes of malnourishment. Central Television quickly put together an affecting documentary called *Seeds of Despair*.

After the documentary had been screened privately in London, but before it had aired, the BBC managed to get correspondent Michael Buerk into Ethiopia. The first of his heartrending broadcasts from a feeding camp in southern Ethiopia aired on July 17, "scooping" *Seeds of Despair* by a few hours. The two broadcasts helped raise nine million pounds in donations. NBC — which has a film-sharing arrangement with the BBC — carried excerpts from Buerk's Ethiopia film on August 11, but the piece, which ran on a Saturday, had little impact in the U.S.

The pace of death soon quickened. So in late October, Buerk of the BBC, accompanied by Visnews cameraman Mohamed Amin, returned to Ethiopia. Their report from Wollo in the north, broadcast on October 23, was truly devastating. As viewers saw a three-year-old child die on camera and a throng of adults resembling Auschwitz inmates, Buerk narrated: "Death is all around. A child or an adult dies every twenty minutes. . . . [It is] a Biblical famine, now, in the twentieth century."

This time, American television was stirred to act. The London bureau of NBC, stunned by the report, convinced the home office to give the footage a close look. NBC's New York newsroom was also stunned and anchorman Tom Brokaw said the film must be shown that night. As the broadcast ended, phones at the U.S. headquarters of the Save the Children Fund, which Brokaw had mentioned, began ringing off the hook. BBC's footage was also shown in West Germany and several other European countries, prompting a similar public response. There were widespread calls for governments to increase and speed up aid, which they did.

Strong public interest in the story set

off by the BBC report led to voluminous coverage of the famine by *The Washington Post*, *The New York Times*, *Le Monde*, *Die Welt*, the *London Times*, and other major newspapers. NBC, CBS, and ABC quickly got their own film crews into Ethiopia.

All to the good. Almost immediately, however, a rather unsavory odor began to waft from promotion departments on Fleet Street and at the New York headquarters of NBC.

In London, the mass-circulation tabloids made frenzied use of Ethiopia in their long-running circulation war. Rupert Murdoch's *Sun* ran a SUN TO THE RESCUE campaign and declared in an enormous page-one headline on October 29: SUN SENDS 100,000 POUNDS TO FAMINE KIDS. "We know that *Sun* readers love children — whatever their color or creed," the paper said.

Murdoch's archrival, proprietor Robert Maxwell of the *Daily Mirror*, was not to be outdone. He organized a reader-funded jet "rescue" flight to Addis Ababa. The cargo included not only food and medicine but Maxwell himself, and the press baron's heroic doings were publicized day after day under the logo MIRROR MERCY FLIGHT.

NBC, for its part, ran full-page ads in *The Washington Post* and *The New York Times* in early November praising itself for having led the way in America. The ads carried a photograph of a starving black child clinging to its father; the text, starting with huge headlines, read:

THE ORDEAL OF ETHIOPIA.
THE COMPASSION OF
AMERICA. . .

NBC News will continue its special reports on Ethiopia on The Today Show with Bryant Gumbel and Jane Pauley. . . . [and on] NBC Nightly News with Tom Brokaw.

Squeamish readers might find it hard to stomach the idea of using human agony as an advertising tool. What is more amazing is that NBC became as blatant as the hard-boiled British tabloids in using a promotional premise straight from P.T. Barnum — that there's a sucker born every minute. *The Sun*, the *Mirror*, and NBC had virtually ignored Ethiopia prior to October 23. They subsequently sought to make the public feel that they were particularly compassionate and that

their audiences were participating in a noble cause.

In their defense, the U.S. networks say they had been working on the story for months before last October but had had trouble getting visas from Ethiopia's Marxist government. Joseph Angotti, NBC's general manager for news in Europe, admits, however, that the visa quest and the story did not have a very high priority.

To be sure, NBC, the British tabloids, and the other news organizations that jumped on the famine bandwagon did a great deal of good — not only in spotlighting Ethiopia but in drawing attention to similar crises in Sudan and some twenty other African countries afflicted by drought. Aid agencies are grateful for the publicity. Oxfam, however, is also concerned that much of the coverage is teaching the public the wrong lessons by emphasizing sensational events and facile solutions.

Take the case of Ethiopia's 24,000 Falashas, a tiny minority supposedly descended from a wandering band of ancient Israelites. Israel's bid to save them by a secret airlift was sensational stuff, and it dominated U.S. and European headlines in early January. But the big play given the story, magnifying the impact of premature Israeli disclosure, jeopardized the rescue of thousands of Falashas yet to be airlifted. The story also diverted attention from the fact that, for millions of Ethiopians, there is no promised land, no quick solution.

In fact, as relief agencies point out, emergency relief is merely a stopgap. The hope for countries like Ethiopia ultimately lies in far-reaching aid to fight soil erosion, promote reforestation, beat back the encroaching desert, and otherwise encourage food self-sufficiency.

Alas, such projects are usually about as news-charged as a head of cabbage, especially as far as TV is concerned. But unless a way is found of convincing the public to support long-term aid with the same zeal with which it occasionally backs emergency relief, catastrophes like the one in Ethiopia — and in Brazil — will continue to occur. To bring about such a change in public perceptions, however, would require a major change in the mentality of television executives, who seem to be wedded to the idea that sensation is essential. ■



In bucolic Anderson Valley, editor Bruce Anderson (inset) is rudely shattering the conventions of small-town journalism.

Raising hell in Mendocino county

Or, a 'democratic socialist with nearly overpowering anarchist tendencies' cuts loose in Boonville

by RICHARD REINHARDT

In the print-on-paper trade, the vexations of running a country weekly are almost as notorious as the hazards of launching a monthly magazine. At best, the life of a small-town editor is presumed to consist of innumerable Kiwanis pancake breakfasts, Rebekah Lodge initiations, and slide shows at the Dorcas Circle, interrupted only by the painful pursuit of advertising and the drudgery of running a job-printing business that one was forced to buy to get hold of the paper.

Still, around the newsrooms of big-city papers, where old reporters sit and fantasize by the user-friendly glow of their computer terminals, the dream endures of finding independence, power, and a captive audience as occupant of the editor's chair of a village journal.

Hence the little thrill, the twinge of jealousy, when word drifted around not long ago of an audacious fellow named Bruce Anderson who was sounding off in the style of a latter-day Mencken in a hamlet tucked away among the apple orchards and marijuana plantations of Mendocino County, up in the boondocks of far-northern California. This Anderson, an old rad of the 1960s, had bought a country weekly called the *Anderson Valley Advertiser* (named for the region, not the publisher), and he was now merrily hacking his way to immortality, skinning the school board and flogging the Philistines, while the slaves of the metros were left behind to spoon out bland doses of municipal finance and traffic management in the dying city.

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To urban Californians, the very word Mendocino resonates with soothing undertones. Mendocino (possessive of Mendoza, a Spanish grandee for whom the northern promontory of the California coast was named) murmurs dreamily of redwood groves and rustic cabins like the sea-side hearth where Alan Alda had his way with Ellen Burstyn in *Same Time, Next Year*. Mendocino sings of secret little wineries whose '82 Chardonnay makes your eighteen-dollar Napa Valley nectar taste like Gatorade. Mendocino exhales the fragrance of wild blackberries, apple cider, Bartlett pears, steelhead salmon, and a multimillion dollar yearly crop of pot.

Mendocino, in short, is the epitome of Ecotopian California. Fewer than 75,000 permanent residents rattle around in an area two-thirds the size of Connecticut. The county seat, Ukiah, roughly 13,000 strong, is the largest of four incorporated towns in the county. As for the Anderson Valley, eighteen miles long and a couple of miles across at its widest, it enfolds perhaps 2,000 souls, most of whom are huddled around the town of Boonville.

From the outside, Boonville looks like a sociologist's model of a Northern California Agricultural Village in Transition — a lightly stirred mixture of old timers (loggers, fruit growers, tractor mechanics), exurban hippies who colonized the territory in the late 1960s, weekend ranchers, vineyard owners, proprietors of homes for problem children (a major industry), and Mexican immigrants who work the wineries. There is an annual rodeo and a county fair with pyramids of apples reaching almost to the girders of the basketball pavilion; a plentiful selection of lodges, clubs, and churches; and even a distinctive local language called Boontling — a made-up vocabulary of pungent nouns and verbs that developed here a century ago on early American roots and is still used occasionally by the villagers, who call themselves Boonters.

(Food, for example, is known as "gorm" in Boontling. A grocery or restaurant is a "gorm sale," a cat, a "pus-seek," and a drink, a "horn." The *Advertiser* calls itself "The Boontling Greeley Sheet.")



In Boontling, Horn of Zeese means cup of coffee.



Teddy Masters with his champion pumpkin



The editor of the *Anderson Valley Advertiser* was so fond of this snapshot of two local school officials that he ran it over and over, each time with a different caption. One, a quote from Montaigne, read: "Stubborn and ardent clinging to one's opinion is the best proof of stupidity."



The old Anderson Valley elementary school, now empty



A member of an official raiding party contemplating a portion of Anderson Valley's number one cash crop



The New Boonville Hotel, which was written up in *Gourmet*



A bunch of the boys whooping it up at "Apple Hall" on the Anderson Valley fairgrounds.

Here and there along the valley one finds warnings of incipient chic, the sort of fate that has befallen Napa and Sonoma. The home-grown vegetables and saucy menus of the New Boonville Hotel have captured the attention of such magazines as *Gourmet*, and city folk with cashmere sweaters hanging on their shoulders are seen around the wineries and in the offices of Boonville realtors. For most of the natives, however, the vehicle of choice remains a pickup truck and the crown of fashion a billed cap with the imprint of an appliance dealer on the front. Clearly, this is a grand arena for a country editor with an urge to tell a town about itself.

In this case, the country editor, Bruce Anderson, is one of those transplanted San Franciscans who moved here fifteen years ago, glutted with the politics and peril of the city — a big, heavyset man of forty-five, several inches over six feet tall, bald on top and thickly bearded. He describes himself as a “democratic socialist with nearly overpowering anarchist tendencies,” and this seems to cover his political inclinations as accurately as anything his enemies have said. He goes around in blue jeans and a crew-neck sweater and a longshoreman’s white denim cap. All over the county, he is renowned for asking disrespectful questions, making impudent remarks, and publishing whatever touches his fancy: poems by Anne Sexton, A. E. Housman, and Li Ch’ing-Chao; quotations from Karl Marx, Satchel Paige, and Laura Ingalls Wilder; cartoons syndicated by Paul Conrad and Jules Feiffer; abrasive satires of the county grand jury; articles about forest management, Hare Krishnas, fishing holes, the mistreatment of children in licensed foster homes, the nocturnal habits of foxes; and photographs of his personally designated “Eyesore of the Week.”

Week after week, Anderson has published the same muddy little snapshot of two disfavored public school officials, drink glasses in hand, over such captions as “Boonville toasts polyester hunt finalists” or “The chief disease that reigns this year is folly.” While the metros recently were wearily recording fluctuations in the Gross National Product, Anderson was laying into the “petty arrogance and popinjay shortsightedness” of the county supervisors, or proposing that a reader who had dared to defend one of Anderson’s prey “should immediately be inducted into the Anus Nuzzlers’ Hall of Fame.”

Anderson labels the sports section of his paper “The Toy Department of Life,” and refers to the Boonville school superintendent as “Walking Eagle” (“because he’s too full of it to fly”). He has bestowed his Eyesore of the Week awards upon the town post office, the Kentucky Fried Chicken shop, a neighboring foster home, and the Republican Party information booth (with occupants) at the Mendocino County Fair. “Let’s face it,” Anderson wrote in reply to a correspondent who suggested picking nobler targets, “all of Boonville is an eyesore.”

To city slickers a hundred miles or more from the line of fire, this bombardment of the yokels sounded like more fun than a box of cherry bombs on the Fourth of July. Anderson’s artillery generally has a range of only a few miles, and only the neighbors were being nicked. A reader in Fort Bragg, an hour or so away, wrote in to say she was elated to have “an old-fashioned masochistic horsewhip-

pable editor like you right here in Mendocino County.”

But to many of those within gunshot, the advent of Bruce Anderson as chronicler of Boonville at the beginning of 1984 was like having an ogre take over the castle on the hill. A woman who owns a vineyard at the edge of town says she much preferred the *Advertiser* as it used to be — gentle and parochial, and full of amiable fluff about people’s relatives visiting from Fresno.

“I resent his taking our little rag and turning it into his mouthpiece,” she says. “He’s on this ego-trip, and we’ve lost something that belonged to all of us.”

Over the hill in Ukiah, another weekly changed hands at about the same time that the *Advertiser* fell into the clutches of the ogre, and it almost drove Bruce Anderson’s detractors crayzeek (a Boontling kind of crazy) to compare the slick, professional, well-behaved *Mendocino Grapevine* with the amateur, eccentric, insolent *Anderson Valley Advertiser*. The *Grapevine*, with two or three times the *Advertiser*’s circulation of 1,600 or 2,000 (depending on whom you ask), had been purchased by a couple of young journalists from southern California — George Rose, a photographer, and his wife, Elizabeth Christian, daughter of George Christian, a press secretary to President Lyndon B. Johnson. Both of them had worked for the *Los Angeles Times*, and they seemed determined to give their weekly a modicum of that paper’s imperialistic grandeur, its famous reportorial extravagance.

When the sheriff’s department invited reporters to attend a daylight raid on a marijuana farm, the *Advertiser* and the *Mendocino Grapevine* went along, and the difference in their coverage was a measure of their dissimilarity. The *Grapevine*, which devoted eight of its twenty pages to the story of the raid, profiles of participants, analysis, historical background, commentary, interviews, statistics, and photographs, began its page-one lead: “Even if you were actively trying to avoid it, you would have been hard pressed during the past two weeks not to catch some news about marijuana in Mendocino County. . . .” Anderson’s by-lined account of this pseudo-military operation, staged, as he saw it, for the benefit of “teensy weensy weekly newspapers, microscopic radio stations, and Ukiah’s fledgling television station,” opened: “How could anyone living in Mendocino County pass up an opportunity to observe a marijuana raid? After all, the killer weed is our number one cash crop and provides the foundation for significant parts of the County economy, an economy based on illegal labor, tourists, and dope. . . .”

To the likes of the Boonville vineyard owner, sighing for the days when the *Advertiser* was free of ego, mockery, and bathroom words, there seemed to be balm in Ukiah. Would the *Grapevine* perhaps send a tendril out to the Anderson Valley to rescue the captive Boonters from their masochistic, horsewhippable newspaper editor? Bruce Anderson, foreseeing the threat, took pains to warn his readers that the *Grapevine*, “a boring, predictable, conservative publication,” was now being edited by immigrant yuppies.

A few months after Anderson began pinching and poking the villagers of Boonville, some of his readers turned bel-

ligerent. One Martin Anderson (not related to the publisher or the valley) and one Mary White sent in letters, which Anderson promptly published, suggesting such "remedial action" as cancelling subscriptions, withdrawing advertising, and patronizing other newspapers to improve the publisher's manners.

"A free press, ownership of a paper, or the position of editor is not license to insult or abuse anyone," Martin Anderson wrote. Mrs. White, a member of the much-abused school board, complained: "We feel betrayed. Our contributions are too often distorted with misleading headlines and peppered with inflammatory comments."

It appeared to her, Mrs. White wrote, that the hometown paper was being written for outsiders — people who had no sympathy for Boonville and wanted only to enjoy "the cat and mouse game you are playing with us. . . . You seem to feel . . . that this community is disgustingly ill-educated, ill-bred, and illiterate."

"Gosh, Mary," Anderson replied in his letters-to-the-editor column, "does this mean our trip to Carmel this weekend is off?"

To top off this riposte, Anderson lifted a quote out of the fabric of Mrs. White's letter and used it as the caption for his regular weekly photograph of the two school officials with drinks in hand, to wit: "This community is disgustingly ill-educated, ill-bred, and illiterate. Mary White."

A couple of weeks later the publisher gave his readers a progress report on the advertising boycott inspired by Martin Anderson:

We lost Fisch Brothers well diggers of Sebastopol and Double D Systems of Point Arena. The local real estate outfit called Rancheria Realty removed its ad because after three years of running it they concluded it wasn't effective. . . . [Three] stores refuse to carry the paper, although they don't seem to have any qualms about girlie magazines or publications that carry advertisements for pornography.

Nothing turns on Anderson's juices more than a quarrel about obscenity. Readers — and store owners — who criticize his vocabulary are likely to provoke a sermon on civil liberties reaching back to the *Ulysses* case and perhaps to Aristophanes. When a female reader threatened to cancel her subscription "if you continue to print obscenities such as the word 'penis,'" Anderson seized the opportunity to straighten out everyone's thinking about language, editorial privilege, and masculine anatomy.

"According to the United States Census Bureau," he wrote, "99 percent of American men possess the male appendage, not that anyone has counted heads, so to speak. If the subject should ever arise, pardon the term, I hope you will permit us to use either the term 'wee-wee' or, if you prefer, the more formal 'Mr. Happy.' Please let us know your preference."

The reader's preference was never disclosed, but Anderson hammered away for several weeks at the wedge she had provided.

"It's interesting how some persons become unhinged at what they call 'obscenity,'" he mused, "while the real obscenities, exploitation of children in local institutions, Reagan's foreign policy, State Street [the main street of

Ukiah], and any building occupied or constructed by Cal Trans [the state highway and transportation agency], these obscenities don't raise so much as an eyebrow among the obscenity fighters. Talk about misplaced indignation!"

Anderson professes to be puzzled by the fierceness of his critics. After all, he and his wife, Ling, have been living in Boonville since 1970, when they decided to remove their two young children and their houseful of foster-children from the distractions and temptations of the city.

"When I took over the paper, it wasn't as though I was a stranger," Anderson told an inquisitive visitor not long ago. "I think the only people I've truly alienated since then are some Christian fundamentalists — basically the same ones I was offending before I bought the paper."

In the sixties, before taking refuge in Mendocino, Anderson had been practicing the art of skull-to-skull politics on the college campuses and other jousting grounds of the San Francisco Bay area, and in a Peace Corps mission in Borneo. After three years in Sarawak, teaching and broadcasting, he was expelled by the government and sent home.

"I'm not sure what the actual reason was. I think our own State Department people just said, 'This guy has got to go.' The phrase they used was 'unseemly attacks on a friendly government' — i.e., letters to the local English-language newspaper about American Vietnam policy. The other accusation was, I was fraternizing with the indigenous clandestine communist organization. I played with them on a basketball team."

Anderson brought all the fruits of this rich experience in wave-making to the rudimentary governmental institutions of the Anderson Valley (one justice court, a constable, a handful of community service districts, and one of the ten high schools in the county). A few years after settling in, he tried to buy the *Advertiser*, then owned by Homer Mannix, a long-time Boonter, who had founded the paper in the 1950s; but the deal included a printing plant that Anderson didn't want. For the time being, the outlets for his political opinions were limited to a weekly column in the paper and a seat on the local school board, where he was sufficiently articulate to stir up a recall movement. In the face of the recall, Anderson resigned ("to spare the cost of an election — but they had it anyway, wanted to drive a stake through the heart of the beast"). The recall failed, although Anderson had already left the board; but it must be said that he did not go underground. The singularity of his views and the venom of his tongue were well-known around the schoolhouse, the firehouse, and the lunch counter at the Horn of Zeese (Boontling for cup of coffee) long before he put a \$20,000 mortgage on his house and took possession of the Boontling Greeley Sheet.

From then on, it was mostly fun: forty hours or so a week for him and the same for Ling, hunt-and-peck typesetting, doing the pasteups, taking the Eyesore photographs, writing several articles each week for their eight-to-twelve-page broadsheet. No one could accuse him of neglecting local news. There were fishing reports from Mill Creek and Indian Valley reservoir; interviews with loggers and restaurant op-

erators and students back from college; anecdotes about such figures as Blindman, the Legendary Umpire from Cloverdale, and Weird Wanda, the Witch of Fort Bragg; and, in every issue, the Crime of the Week:

Robert Ansaldo, Fort Bragg, reported an unknown person attempted to remove a tire from his vehicle while he was sitting in it.

At 10:56 the morning of September 18, Sheriff's Deputies were informed that a berserk juvenile was inside the Salvation Army donation box, growling like a dog. It was also reported the juvenile grabbed the hand of a startled depositor as she inserted a bag of donated clothing into the box. The box was empty upon arrival of deputies.

Lena Norman, Fort Bragg, reported that one Michael Danner, address unknown, upholstered her thumb without her permission.

There also were experiments in bolder fantasy, as in a story last October reporting that the superintendent of county schools had announced that he would sponsor a weekend clinic in masturbation techniques. The superintendent was not amused. His lawyers demanded and received a printed retraction: "The Wanker's Workshop never took place nor is Superintendent Delsol a wanker nor did Superintendent Delsol have any connection whatsoever with this fictitious event." No apology was asked or given.

Talking it over later, Anderson allowed that the article

Buttering up the grand jury

Under the title "An Evening with the Mendocino County Grand Jury," the *Anderson Valley Advertiser* offered its readers last fall this novel example of nonobjective political reporting:

The jurors are an unpromising lot. Their language has no words for "honesty" or "marriage." They go around naked and do not know how to make pots, weave cloth, or build a hut. They eat insects and lizards and anything else. If a particularly good thing to eat is discovered, they tie a string around it, swallow the morsel, pull it back up, and pass it to the next juror. At the Broiler Steak House, the jurors gorge themselves, stopping only for naps and to fornicate with everyone regardless of age, family ties, or disability. Then they defecate on flat rocks so undigested fruit seeds can be picked out and ground into flour.

A month or so earlier, Bruce Anderson had complained in his editorial column that the grand jury was "overwhelmingly Republican, overwhelmingly male, overwhelmingly on the verge of dotage, and all white."

In the opinion of at least one reader, however, these traits, even if true, did not warrant the Swiftian savagery of Anderson's attack. A subscriber in Grants Pass, Oregon, 400 miles beyond the extended circulation area of Mendocino County, wrote in to say that he thought the piece was "ugly, obscene, pernicious, [and] not funny."

"Why in hell," the reader asked, "did you print it?"

"The Grand Jury asked me to print it as a community service announcement," Anderson replied, "because their meals are publicly funded." R. R.

"probably was ill-conceived." Then, as if amending even this admission, he went on: "I feel philosophically that anything goes, short of outright slander, any expression of opinion. Actually, this paper is a community forum. I put in all the letters I get, even things that attack me personally. I don't shut out anyone's opinion. . . . I don't want your typical left-wing paper, very humorless and boring. I agree with the conservatives on a lot of things — the problems of bureaucracy, drug trafficking, street crime — and I line up with the traditional people in that I see the Anderson Valley imperiled by development. . . . There are a lot of so-called conservatives here, but they tend to be inarticulate. They don't know how to express themselves. That's not my fault. I can't force them to express themselves."

To Elizabeth Christian and George Rose, warily watching from an office kitty-corner to the Ukiah courthouse on the obscenity called State Street, this sounds like a standard excuse for running a polemical newspaper.

"This county was deeply polarized some time back when all the new residents came in," Christian says, "and for six years the economy has been stagnant. The average income is seventeen thousand dollars, and there's been slow growth. Polarization for the sake of polarization, just so one man can amuse himself, that isn't going to help us move out of any of this."

Rose adds: "He's not a journalist, that's all. Just a guy having a ball. He thinks he's like Izzy Stone or Paul Krassner, doing the sort of thing he admires. But if his paper is gaining any circulation, it's from outsiders. It's some PhD driving through and picking up the paper and saying, 'Hey, man! This is really something!'"

Yet even a dispassionate outsider senses something inappropriate, insidious about Bruce Anderson's style of small-town journalism. The problem is not that Anderson neglects or misrepresents Boonville. The *Advertiser* fairly reeks with the fragrance of apple orchards and sinsemilla Mary Jane. Nor is it that Anderson is excessively devoted to his own point of view, for most of his audience apparently accepts his argument that a person has the right to publish whatsoever he or she wants. Nor, in the end, is it that Anderson makes fun of people. His targets nearly always are persons who enjoy the prestige and privileges of public office and thereby have sacrificed some of their privacy.

Is it perhaps the savagery of his attack? His fondness for using a sawed-off shotgun against a fly? His self-righteousness? His absolute refusal to give anyone else the last word? In short, is it Anderson's First Amendment arrogance that turns one's sympathy against the shining knight and towards the fallen dragon?

This is coming close. When Anderson's critics attempted to punish him with a boycott, he cried out that his enemies were trying to silence a "tiny, impoverished publication." That did not sound like the outcry of a heart torn with savage indignation but the whining of a sniper flushed from cover. Most of us, at times, have felt tiny and impoverished — and never more so than when we have been tormented by a columnist, a critic, or a reporter: by some errant bully armed with the withering power of the press, the power of the last word. ■

Manhattan, inc. — yuppie power tool

by MICHAEL MASSING

Every so often a magazine comes along that perfectly suits the spirit of its time. In the 1930s, for instance, *Life* magazine made it big by opening a window on the world for a generation of newly inquisitive Americans. In the 1960s, *Rolling Stone* articulated the musical tastes and political goals of the Aquarian age. In the 1970s, it was *New York* magazine, which instructed aspiring urban gentry in the rituals of metropolitan life. And now, as the yuppies hit their stride, along comes *Manhattan, inc.*

When it made its debut last September, *Manhattan, inc.* seemed, on the surface, another entry in the booming field of local business magazines. On closer inspection, though, it's clearly something more. Based in the business capital of America, *Manhattan, inc.* enjoys extraordinary visibility. What's more, it's not really a business magazine at all, at least in the traditional sense. Most of its writers have little background in business, and seem to know more about converting lofts than convertible bonds.

Nor is *Manhattan, inc.* going after the usual wingtip-and-briefcase crowd, as is clear from a recent direct-mail flyer: "In *Manhattan, inc.*, you meet the people you should know. The other movers and shakers. . . . In *Manhattan, inc.*, you meet your peers at the top and learn how they rose to the pinnacle of power. . . . You learn how things come together. Who does what for whom and why."

Manhattan, inc. describes itself as a mix of *Forbes*, *Fortune*, *Business Week*, *New York*, and *Texas Monthly*. (It might add *People*.) Put them all together and you get something entirely new — the nation's first magazine put out expressly for yuppies. *Manhattan, inc.*, in fact, is helping to define a whole new genre of yuppie journalism. It reads like a primer for the upwardly mobile, helping ambitious young professionals dress for success, locate "in" firms, and make the right connections. *Manhattan, inc.* re-

veals how John Reed made it to the top of Citicorp at the age of forty-five, charts the rise of New York's first cosmetic surgery chain, and explains why Fred the Furrier is leaving Alexander's for Bloomingdale's.

Manhattan, inc. also introduces you to people like Alice Mason, one of New York's highest-grossing realtors, whose clients include some of the city's most prominent residents. How does she do it? By throwing lavish dinner parties and inviting powerful people to attend. "Few, if any, hostesses entertain so many of the people who run New York," we learn. "Her home has become, if not exactly a salon, then perhaps an at-home Elaine's for Manhattan's meritocracy. She is a top-notch professional around whom other top professionals seem to feel entirely at ease." At one soiree we run into Alexander Haig, Norman Mailer, and Philip Johnson. Diane Sawyer plays a "parlor game of sorts" with her date, asking, "Who was the last world leader to take risks?" Alas, she must cut the fun short — the *paupiette de sole florentine* is on the way.

You also get an introduction to Gerry Roche, *Manhattan's* "high priest of headhunting," the man who placed John Sculley at Apple and Tom Wyman at CBS. This meeting is a rare privilege for "Gerry Roche only deals with people at the very top. Where the action is. Where the fun is." Roche confides that he likes his line of work: "The thing that really gets my juices flowing are achievers, people who have done things. I love being around those people. I'm dealing with that rarefied group right at the top." Fortune 500 companies flock to Roche for help in recruiting executives, and, make no mistake about it, he's up to the job: "As a recruiter of ultra-high-class talent, the 'super achievers,' as he calls them, he has become one himself."

Yuppie journalism should not be confused with its older cousin, city-magazine journalism. The two schools do have a good deal in common — a fas-

cination with wealth, a preoccupation with status, a hunger to be on the cutting edge in cuisine and couture. What distinguishes yuppie journalism is its over-riding, almost obsessive concern with power — who has it, how to get it, what to do with it. The magazine's features often read like parables in the use of power, cautionary tales of boardroom hubris. There's the case, for instance, of Brian Marlowe, head of a building-maintenance firm that has given face-lifts to many premium properties. Now, however, his classy image is threatened by former client Leona Helmsley, the vengeful queen of Manhattan realty, who, alleging shoddy work, has hit Marlowe's firm with a \$34-million lawsuit.

Poor Lisa Birnbach. A short while back, she rode *The Official Preppy Handbook* to fame, fortune, and the David Letterman show. Today, she must endure the nasty barbs of her former collaborators, who charge that she didn't really write the book at all. And Leo Castelli, the magnanimous Medici of the Manhattan art-gallery world, faces a stiff challenge from a new, more commercial breed of gallery owner. The battle is being closely watched: "In SoHo these days, and in the art ghettos along 57th Street and Madison, they are talking about the old world and the new, placing bets on who will emerge the winner."

They are also talking about *Manhattan, inc.* The magazine has gotten off to a fast start, gaining 43,000 subscribers after only five issues (its target is 100,000 within five years). And its appeal is not limited to yuppies. Columnist Liz Smith, who is too old to be one, wrote that *Manhattan, inc.* has made the "biggest splash by any magazine in decades." An informal survey of my friends, who are too poor to be yuppies, turned up high approval ratings. (This might not be entirely welcome news to *Manhattan, inc.*, which is targeting subscribers with a minimum income of \$50,000. Median income to date is \$80,000.)

Manhattan, inc. is, undeniably, great fun. The graphics are sumptuous and the layout often ingenious. Its writers have perfected the breezy, knowing style appropriate for mixing with the sophisticated set. And, like a good gossip columnist, *Manhattan, inc.* never takes

Michael Massing is a contributing editor of the Review.

itself too seriously. It seems to be describing its own temperament when it observes of one mover/shaker that she "hates to be bored. She avoids bores the way some people shun brussels sprouts." At *Manhattan, inc.* the eyebrows are always arched.

Nevertheless, the magazine leaves little doubt about which side it will be on when the revolution comes. One of its departments, "Power Tools," features such items as a personal executive shredder ("Zip, rip, whirr and the evidence is gone") and a pocket-sized "little big board" that instantaneously relays stock averages (price: \$495). A regular column on ethical dilemmas poses such tough nuts as: When one brokerage house buys out another, is it proper for laid-off employees to take their clients with them? Businessmen are treated with the breathless wonder formerly reserved for rock stars, and articles about realtors often read like excerpts from *The Fountainhead*. (The realtors, for their part, seem grateful for the unaccustomed acclaim; Donald Trump, New York's mash-'em-up master builder, gushed in a letter to the editor, "Good luck — you have a winner!")

The emerging sensibility of yuppie journalism is so new that it even requires a novel vocabulary. *Manhattan, inc.*'s world is populated by aggressive young MBAs who glide along fast-and-narrow tracks in the high-stakes race to get in on the action. Battle images abound, making behind-closed-doors accounts of boardroom struggles sound like dispatches from the Iran-Iraq war. ("With Steinberg wheeling up the heavy siege weapons, the time had come for Disney to reinforce the barricades at the Magic Kingdom.") Companies are not big, expanding, or creative, they are "hot," as in "Simon and Schuster is now being called the hottest house in the industry." Executives at hot publishing houses wear aviator-style specs that are called "power glasses."

And then there is the "power lunch." You don't need power glasses to have a power lunch, but it helps to have a corner table, and it is essential to meet at restaurants where other people have power lunches. In *Manhattan, inc.* the measure of a man is best taken by the restaurants he frequents. The November cover story features a power lunch with superlawyer

Roy Cohn at the fashionable Le Cirque. Roy (as he's referred to throughout the piece) always sits at the same table, "the best, the one with the wide-angled view of the mirrored, flowered, high-powered array of Le Cirque at lunch." Over the course of three hours, Roy waves to Barbara Walters (who sits at the second-best table), tells stories, chuckles, eats (tuna fish with Hellmann's), and finally waxes nostalgic over the "high-powered, heady excitement" of the good old days.

Manhattan, inc. is the creation of D. Herbert Lipson, publisher of *Philadelphia* and *Boston* magazines. It represents Lipson's effort to break into the lucrative



New York publishing market. With *New York* and *The Village Voice* already monopolizing the city-magazine field, Lipson saw that the world capital of finance, advertising, communications, and fashion did not have a business magazine of its own. And so the new monthly was born. Lipson brought in Jane Amsterdam as editor. For the previous four years Amsterdam had worked at *The Washington Post*, first as an editor of the Style section, then as deputy editor of Bob Woodward's investigative unit. Before that, she had worked at *The American Lawyer* and at *New Times*, where she was executive editor. In putting together *Manhattan, Inc.*, Amsterdam recruited several colleagues from her *New Times* days, among them Jonathan Z. Larsen, Robert Sam Anson, and Ron Rosenbaum, all of whom now serve as contributing editors.

The *New Times* connection is interesting. While it offered up its own share

of fluff, *New Times* also published some of the most innovative, hard-hitting journalism of the mid-1970s. Whether it was taking on the Black Panthers, Pol Pot, or the effects of aerosol cans on the ozone, *New Times* had a sense of journalistic mission. It regarded power with skepticism and frequently exposed ways in which it was abused. In 1978, however, *New Times* folded, a casualty of sagging circulation, stagnant advertising, and its publisher's indifference.

Six years after *New Times*'s demise, *Manhattan, inc.* has sprung up as an upscale successor. Occasionally, the old fire does break through. For instance, Gwenda Blair's careful reconstruction of last year's suicide by *Newsweek* journalist Elizabeth Peer showed how personal problems, compounded by the magazine's insensitivity, wrecked the life of a proud, temperamental woman. And Jonathan Larsen's excellent piece on Dun & Bradstreet revealed how the giant credit-rating company, regarded by many as infallible, has in fact damaged many firms by its shoddy reporting practices. Generally, though, *Manhattan, inc.* seems more eager to embrace the heroes of capitalism than its victims.

I asked editor Amsterdam about the change from *New Times* to *Manhattan, inc.* She concedes that her current publication has a "stronger commercial appeal," but adds that she expects to run tough pieces in the future. "We haven't had any real killer investigative piece to this point," she says. More generally, Amsterdam observes, "My politics haven't changed that much. I wouldn't say I've sold out. I don't think I've gotten soft. But I used not to listen to anybody I didn't agree with. I didn't want to hear the other side. Now I don't want to be guided through and told what to think."

At the same time, Amsterdam acknowledges that times have changed. Some of the journalists writing for *Manhattan, inc.*, she says, now sit down to lunch with people they would not have dreamed of associating with five years ago. "*New Times* was an antibusiness magazine," she observes. "Everybody was antibusiness then. Today there's not room for a one-hundred-percent muckraking magazine. Reporting has changed. The world has changed."

Indeed it has, and *Manhattan, inc.* shows how much. ■

BOOKS

The palace guard

**Royal Pursuit:
The Media and the Monarchy
in Conflict and Compromise**

by Douglas Keay
Dodd, Mead and Company. 251 pp.
\$15.95

by PIERs BRENDON

Observing with amazement the restrictions which Buckingham Palace successfully imposed on the reporting of President Reagan's visit to Queen Elizabeth in 1982, a White House aide commented: "In the United States, the press plays a much stronger role in political life than it does in Britain, where there is a much more controlled environment. Over here it's like a bureaucrat's dream."

Yes, indeed. Ever since the late nineteenth century, when the odd newspaper dared to jest that there was nothing between Edward, Prince of Wales, and Lily Langtry, "not even a sheet," the British press has treated the monarchy with respect bordering on reverence. The Tory *Daily Telegraph*, for instance, saw nothing incongruous in printing items like this: "I was greatly struck by the deferential attitude of the man who was washing the face of Queen Victoria on the Temple Bar Monument." Fleet Street editors generally thought it quite proper to enter into a "gentleman's agreement" with the sovereign to conceal from the British public what the rest of the world knew, namely that King Edward VIII was having an affair with Mrs. Simpson — hence the shock and outrage when the news did break.

But the lesson the monarchy learned from the abdication debacle was that it should surround itself with more se-

crecy, not less. And the newspapers, having abdicated their own responsibilities, did not now see it as their duty to publish and be damned. When newsreel cameras were allowed into Westminster Abbey for the first time, to record George VI's coronation in 1937, the professedly radical *Daily Mirror* wrote, apparently without irony, that the Archbishop of Canterbury, "ever vigilant of public interest and good taste," would view the film and "cut out anything which may be considered unsuitable for the public at large to see."

Modern sovereigns have heeded the maxims of the Victorian constitutional theorist Walter Bagehot, who said that the masses would only venerate a sacrosanct monarchy: "In its mystery is its life. We must not let daylight in upon its magic." Thus it was that Sir Richard Colville (an ex-naval commander who knew nothing about newspapers and regarded journalists as tradesmen), who was royal press secretary from 1947 to 1968, explained that, "My job is for the most part to keep stories about the queen out of the press." Some of his successors have taken a less negative line, evidently regarding themselves as public relations officers with a unique product to promote in a seller's market. Even so, their basic attitude toward the press has been one of suspicion and hostility.

They are bound by antique tradition and gagged by awed caution. The first woman court correspondent proved acceptable only after it was discovered that her grandfather had served as a colonel in the Coldstream Guards and her father had been to school at Eton. When a man broke into the queen's bedroom at Buckingham Palace in 1982, the instinct of her advisers was to conceal the fact; it was revealed only because one journalist had a Deep Throat at court who was rightly convinced that security at the palace would never be tightened up without a public scandal. Sometimes the royal

passion for secrecy takes pathological forms. When the Queen Mother was taken to the hospital recently with a "foreign body" stuck in her throat, her official spokesman would not at first say what it was. And when journalists finally discovered that it was a fishbone, he refused to disclose that the fish in question was a trout.

The royals, of course, want to have it both ways. They want the publicity due their public office and the privacy a private person might expect. So they constantly complain about the intrusiveness of pressmen, whom they call "pests" and "bloody vultures." But when photographers protest against royal ruderies by ostentatiously refusing to take pictures they get instant cooperation. For like *Dallas*, Palace, the interminable British soap opera, is nothing unless recorded on film. At the same time, however, there must be no media *lèse majesté*. The royals employ a battery of weapons, from the restrictive libel laws to the catch-all Official Secrets Act, to censor unfavorable publicity. And, to paraphrase Disraeli, anything less than flattery laid on with a trowel is liable to be construed as criticism. Stephen Barry was about as sycophantic as a royal flunky could be, but his book about Prince Charles could not be published in Britain.

That Douglas Keay's *Royal Pursuit* has not suffered a similar fate is doubtless due to his determination to avoid making enemies either in the press or at the palace, "because my bread and butter comes from one, and my respect goes out to both." His book is as inoffensive, not to say ingratiating, as this bland sentiment suggests. Far from an incisive examination of the relationship between the media and the monarchy, Keay offers a cosy recapitulation of royal stories that have hit the headlines — how pictures were taken of

Piers Brendon, author of *The Life and Death of the Press Barons*, lives in Cambridge, England.

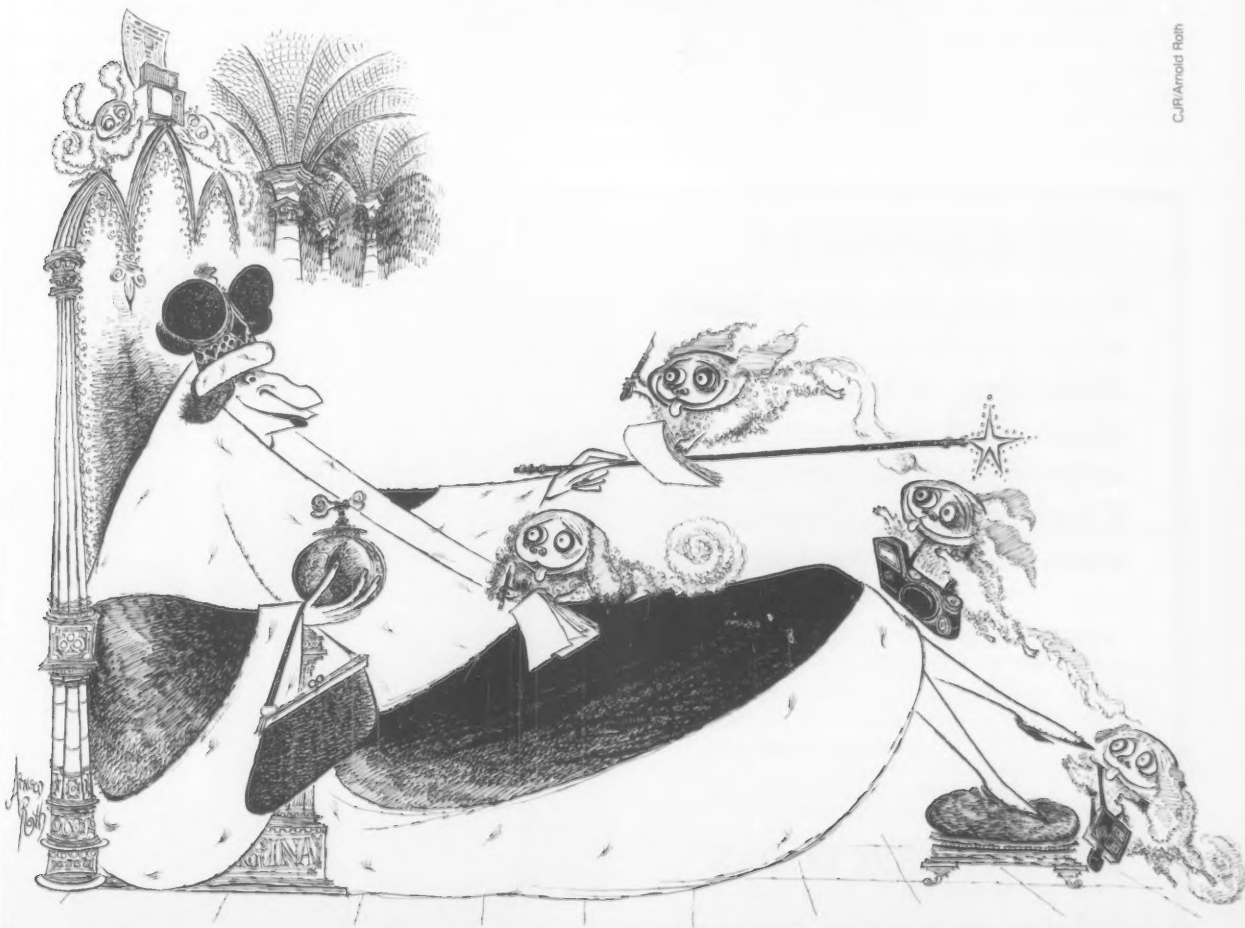
pregnant Princess Di in a bikini; who discovered that Randy Andy was on holiday with Koo Stark; why the queen was appalled, when horseback-riding with Reagan, at the uninhibited antics of American newsmen. And there are compliments all round — the “dearly loved” Queen Mother, for example, is said to have “graced public life in pastel shades for over half a century.” Indeed, Keay’s confection would scarcely be worth re-viewing in these pages at all but for the fact that under the coat of sugar icing it does contain some plums of information. It gives a vivid journalist’s-eye-view of the backstage machinery, Byzantine in its complexity, which sustains the monarch’s public performances. And it includes some revealing anecdotes about royal private lives—about Edward VII, for example, who before he lost patience with golf had every bunker he landed in

moved. And, more important, it epitomizes the besotted attitude of the British public towards the monarchy that is largely reflected in the press.

For the extraordinary thing about Fleet Street is that it scarcely needs to be restrained by the legal and bureaucratic apparatus available to the palace. It acts quite voluntarily as a medium of monarchical propaganda — about 99 percent of the items it publishes about royalty are favorable. Just as lobby correspondents are in bed, so to speak, with Mrs. Thatcher, so court correspondents are in bed with the queen. There are virtually no fundamental criticisms in the newspapers of the strange feudal anachronism at the heart of Britain’s supposed democracy. It is true that amid printed acres of obsequious gossip there are occasional items that embarrass and even outrage the monarchy. But repub-

licanism is taboo. Instead, the press panders to its readers’ weakness for ceremony, snobbery, and fantasy, tastes which have helped to make Britain so determinedly retrogressive and which prompted the playwright John Osborne to describe British royalty as the “gold filling in a mouth full of decay.”

Yet if Fleet Street places its devotion to the crown above its duty as the fourth estate of the realm, it does so for the best of all possible motives — lucre. Drivel about the royal corgis sells newspapers. A picture of the Princess of Wales on the cover of a journal is practically guaranteed to raise its circulation by 10 to 15 percent. Her photograph also adorns the jacket of *Royal Pursuit*, a pretty indication that Mr. Keay’s book is no serious critical inquiry but yet another soggy display of journalistic loyalty to royalty.



C.J. Arnold Roth

The anomalous journalist

Ida Tarbell: Portrait of a Muckraker

by Kathleen Brady

Seaview/Putnam 286 pp. \$17.95

by JAMES BOYLAN

If you set aside five critical years of her life and look at the rest of Ida Tarbell's career, you can hardly recognize her as a muckraker. She was an intelligent, highly independent, young, middle-class woman from western Pennsylvania, born just before the Civil War, who got herself to college, served an editorial apprenticeship on a provincial magazine, escaped to Paris to learn to be a writer, was lured back to join the staff of a new national magazine, became one of its mainstay writers and editors, left in a disagreement with the founder, helped run a new magazine, and then, a

James Boylan, a contributing editor of CJR, is working on a study of muckraking.

single woman, worked the rest of her days as a free-lance lecturer and writer to support herself and members of her extended family. The title of her autobiography, published when she was past eighty, expressed it well: *All in the Day's Work*. It was a respectable career, but not one that would have kept her name alive for posterity.

Those remaining five years have preserved her name. Between 1901 and 1906, she became a celebrity, as eminent in the journalism of her day as were Woodward and Bernstein in theirs. As an editor and writer at *McClure's Magazine*, she had gained some popularity as a biographer of Napoleon and Lincoln. In mid-1901, not knowing how far it would lead, she set to work on an investigation of John D. Rockefeller's Standard Oil Company, which had risen since the Civil War to dominance and arrogance. Like the oil companies of today, Standard Oil did not care to be investigated. But Tarbell and a single assistant, using skills and enterprise that were fully the equal of those displayed

in *All the President's Men*, excavated a whole history of gouging and foul play, including a system of business espionage worthy of the CIA. Tarbell's findings appeared, starting in the November 1902 issue of *McClure's*, in twenty installments produced under intense deadline pressure. A two-volume book edition appeared in 1904, and four additional articles appeared by 1905. This achievement made *McClure's* and Tarbell preeminent in what was initially called, with some justice, the "literature of exposure."

It was said at the time, and has been said since, that Ida Tarbell took out after Standard Oil as an act of vengeance, for Rockefeller had driven members of her family out of the oil fields of western Pennsylvania. This new biography makes clear that retribution was buried far below a professional compulsion to excavate and publish all the facts, no matter where they led. At the start, in fact, Tarbell was so open-minded that she was not even sure that

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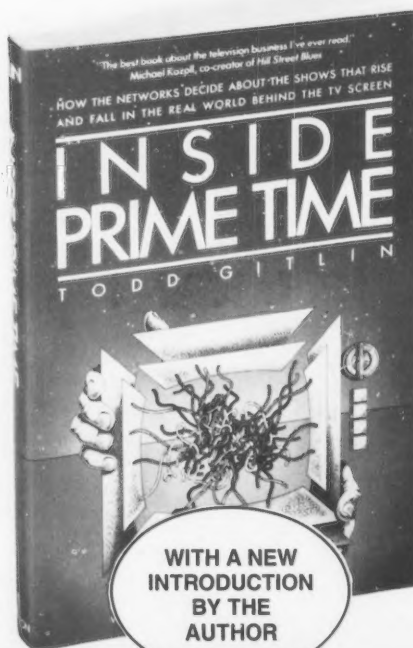
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her investigation would lead to an unfavorable appraisal of Standard Oil. Yet the record of unethical practices and personal hypocrisy eventually so overwhelmed her that she stepped over the line once and wrote a harsh personal appraisal of Rockefeller, which appeared in the magazine a year after publication of the main study.

Among those who came to be labeled muckrakers (a term, not meant as a compliment, borrowed by Theodore Roosevelt from *Pilgrim's Progress*), only Upton Sinclair, who exposed the Chicago stockyards' dirty meat and dirty working conditions in *The Jungle*, rivaled Tarbell. When she toured the plains states in 1905 to study Standard's operations in that region, she could hardly get her reporting done because of demands for public appearances. But she did not savor the attention; she was never comfortable with the appellation of muckraker, or with the public persona of a scourge of corruption, and she was relieved when the public spotlight turned away from her. Her only major inves-

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*Ida Tarbell
in 1904*



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BOOKS

tigation after Standard Oil was an inquiry into the tariff, a subject well suited to her ability to dissect complexity, but of considerably less dramatic interest.

Kathleen Brady's admirable new biography deals with Ida Tarbell's muck-raking career in a single pithy chapter — a chapter that incidentally reveals much more about Tarbell's resourcefulness and courage under pressure than Tarbell ever claimed in her own autobiography. It may be tempting, then, to regard the rest of the book as of minor interest. It is not. It may be a fortunate circumstance that Tarbell remained famous enough to merit a biography in the 1980s, for much of the rest of her life holds considerable interest as the account of the mottled destiny of a more than ordinarily talented woman in American society.

Brady has been remarkably successful in her attempt to reconstruct the interior life of a subject who does not yield easily to such examination. The biographer has explored and studied the documentary record, scattered in dozens of libraries around the country, with Tarbellian thoroughness and tenacity; equally important, she read what she found with discernment and without the psychosexual speculation that has marred a few recent biographies of women.

Herself a magazine journalist, Brady portrays very well the dominant role that work, and the compulsion to work, played in Tarbell's life. At the same time, Brady illuminates the paradox that even when she was most successful Tarbell regarded herself not as a model but as an anomaly, a misfit who had unsuited herself for the proper life of a woman.

Thus she led a peculiarly cramped life. Her personal relationships with both sexes were marked by steadfastness and loyalty; at the same time, they were cautious and never, so far as is known, intimate. And her politics, especially from the point of view of those concerned with causes, were also restrained to the point of suffocation. Her work had given her a keen sense of social justice and yet she never associated herself openly with a reform movement. Her resistance to the claims of feminism went so far as to lead her to oppose women's suffrage, much to the perplexity of her women friends.

In later years, moreover, she rejected opportunities to reenter the mainstream of public affairs, turning down, for example, an appointment offered by President Wilson. Instead, she persisted in her daily work, out of choice and necessity, and was at work on a book manuscript, *Life After Eighty*, when she died in 1944.

Brady concludes that Tarbell consistently underrated herself and her achievements, that she had the ability but not the psyche for a more revolutionary role. The biographer attributes this paradox to Tarbell's being "a woman in a male world." And yet one sees in it as well the seeming humility of the workhorse journalist, who identifies virtue with obtaining all the facts and meeting the next deadline. In other words, she may have been working under a dual handicap — that of being a woman in a male world and that of being a neutral journalist in a partisan world.

Images and icons

War Torn

Photographs edited by Susan Vermazen

Introduction by Thomas L. Friedman
Pantheon Books. 139 pp.

\$30 hardcover, \$14.95 paper

by ANNE NELSON

It is hard to imagine a more searing collection of images than those contained in *War Torn*. Representing the work of thirty-one photographers, *War Torn* purports to tell us what the wars of the 1980s are like, and the message is unbearable. In Eddie Adams's photograph from Thailand, a refugee woman holds her skeletal infant, who stares into the camera with shell-shocked eyes. In James Nachtwey's photograph from Lebanon, a grim man walks away from a car bombing carrying a limp child; his deliberate calm tells us the child is dead. In Roland Neveu's work, skulls line a Cambodian hillside like pebbles on a riverbed; one, obscenely, still wears a blindfold. Page after page informs us

Anne Nelson's articles about, and photographs of, Central America have appeared in a number of national publications.

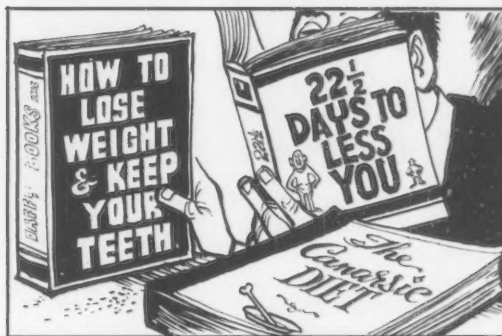
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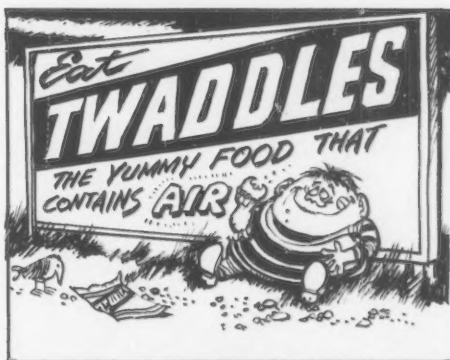
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Emblems of war



A León woman whose mother and two children were killed by a government rocket returns to the destroyed building in the now abandoned barrio, after the funerals. Nicaragua, 1979, Richard Cross



Cambodian refugee family struggling to reach the Thai border during the rainy season. Cambodia, 1979, Roland Neveu

Shiite Moslem children play on a still-functioning Palestinian anti-aircraft gun near a refugee camp in South Beirut. Lebanon, 1982, Steve McCurry



Photos and captions from *War Torn*

that there is more than one place where children clamber over tanks as though they were jungle gyms, where old people sit hunched over graves with their heads in their hands, heartbroken, angry, and astonished.

War Torn also establishes that war can be beautiful; there are pages devoted to the classic geometry of twisted wire and pockmarked walls. It shows us technical marvels of freeze-frame action and dusky silhouettes made possible by the latest advances in high-speed color film and motor drive. Photographers' credit lines bounce from war to war, Nicaragua, Cambodia, Afghanistan — testimony to modern jet travel and to the modern psyche, traveling with a minimum of physical and emotional baggage.

Yet for all the strengths of its imagery, *War Torn* also reflects many of the weaknesses common to news and documentary photography today: a reluctance to probe, to tell stories, to lend depth to the human beings who are enduring their suffering so publicly. War is not only the backdrop; it is also the star. It remains constant while human beings are reduced to insignificant secondary players scurrying hopelessly across the stage. This book tells us that war is universal, but it fails to locate particular wars in their historical and social context: rubble and corpses look the same whether they're in San Salvador or Beirut. The result is, paradoxically, to keep war at arm's length. War becomes a series of glossy, exotic images that play on the viewer's morbid fascination.

Part of the difficulty for photojournalists today is the political ambiguity of the conflicts they cover; few Americans can name the players in Beirut, and many do not know which side the United States is backing in Central America. Enemies like the Nazis made it easier for earlier generations of American photographers, who covered American wars from an American point of view. Captions then reflected the national mythology, and empathy for heroes and victims was an extension of patriotism. Photography told the story of World War II as no other medium did, and the great picture magazines provided photographers with the means and space to tell it well.

The conventions of the photo essay in *Life* and *Look* encouraged, even obliged, photographers to live with their subjects. This intimacy produced photographs that registered the many textures of life. Moments of joy, humor, lust, and boredom were recorded as just as much a part of war as the second of the bullet's impact; more important, they provided the essential link of humanity between war's anonymous victims and a comfortable audience looking at photographs a continent away.

In today's brushfire wars, it is harder to distinguish friends and foes, and a readership looking at pictures of refugees needs to be told who they are and how they've been displaced. But photojournalists now have the marketplace working against them. Most of the great picture magazines are dead; luckily, *Life* has reappeared in a new incarnation, but even it has had trouble reviving the picture essay. Thanks in part to television, the public's attention span, it seems, has shortened. There is less and less opportunity for the leisurely ten-page spreads of the past, where a Eugene Smith or an Eve Arnold could render the ordinary extraordinary. The *National Geographic* has always eschewed hard news. Other magazines, such as *The New York Times Magazine*, publish some first-rate photography but keep it subordinate to text.

In today's market most photojournalists earn their livings through the big French and American photo agencies, which in turn depend on the newsweeklies for bread-and-butter income. In order to work, many of the photojournalists who take on international assignments find themselves in fierce competition for day rates (starting at about \$300) and being judged by their ability to capture the single image that will run with a weekly story. And although many newsweekly photo editors have a good eye, their editorial needs prejudice them in favor of the banal: standard head shots, airport scenes of U.S. officials, sensationalistic "bang-bang," or this decade's favorite visual cliché, the sixteen-year-old brandishing a submachine-gun.

The advantage of this use of photo-

graphy is that the busy newsweekly reader gets an instant clue to what he is going to read; the disadvantage is that the photographer knows what he's looking for before he shoots. There is little incentive for creativity, intimacy, or an investment of time. There is a great deal of pressure to bet on the right "war of the week"; if the war doesn't run, neither does the photo. Learning the language and sharing an affinity with the subjects count for less than technology and technique. We are seeing more and more bodies arranged in artful compositions; we are coming away with less and less of a sense of who those bodies were.

If these complaints seem carping, one need only to turn to Philip Jones Griffiths's 1971 classic, *Vietnam Inc.*, for an idea of what the medium can achieve. Griffiths takes on the great theme of war and its effect on society and individual lives. He requires each of his photographs, all of them black and white, to make sense within its context in the layout. He has written a detailed and sensitive text and applies it with discretion,

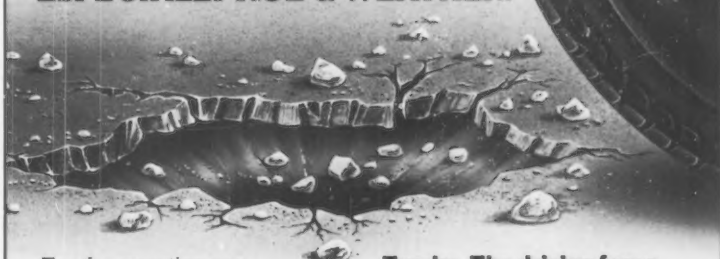
a line here, a page there, always taking pains to describe who the Vietnamese are before he shows what the war has done to them. And on occasion Griffiths reveals himself, too, to be heartbroken, angry, and astonished.

In *War Torn*, by contrast, each image stands apart as an icon, insisting that the viewer read everything into it. The layout offers no clues, tells no story. Captions are brief and cryptic and sometimes appear pages away. Thomas L. Friedman's introduction makes the heartfelt point that war's victims, usually presented as statistics, are really individuals, "one plus one plus one. . . ." But the observation works at cross purposes with the rest of the book. *War Torn* would not be so disturbing if it were an isolated example, but in fact it is emblematic of our decade's photographic conventions. The photographers who contributed to *War Torn* can be justly proud of their virtuosity. But they owe their readers a more thoughtful orientation to their subject. And the editors of this book owe the photographers a more respectful presentation of their work. ■

Answer:



**WEATHER,
CHEMICALS,
EROSION, TRAFFIC, AGE,
CONSTRUCTION DEFECTS...
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For the question see page 23.

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BRIEFINGS

by GLORIA COOPER

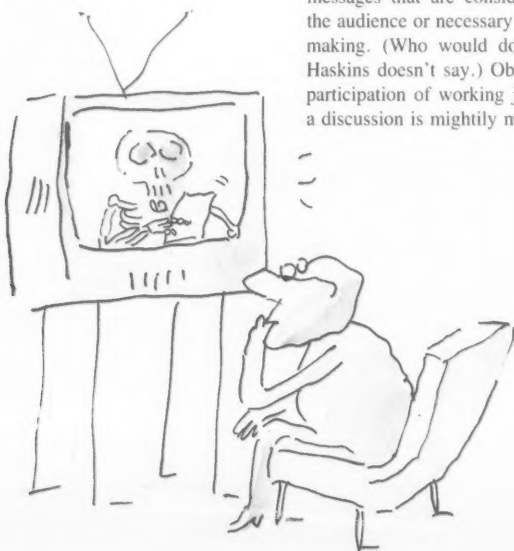
Bad news, worse news

Morbid Curiosity and the Mass Media, a symposium sponsored by the University of Tennessee and the Gannett Foundation, April 5-6, 1984

The force that undoes proverbial cats drives real live two-legged beasts to pick up a morning paper and switch on the evening news. Is the inquisitiveness that fells those hapless felines of quite the same order as that which irresistibly draws readers and viewers toward news accounts of accidents and disasters, violence and crime, blood and guts and gore — accounts that generally involve people that they don't even know? Can the need for such news be possibly programmed in our very genes, part of an information-gathering system that encourages adaptation and thereby insures the species' survival? How much of such information is enough to produce positive social values — the fostering of compassion and social responsibility, the relief of boredom, the catharsis of destructive emotions — and at what point do diminishing, even counterproductive, returns for society — desensitization, depression, anxiety, distrust — begin to set in? What is the relationship between information and sensation, and what purpose is served by the "safe

thrills" experienced through the news and other media? What is one to make of a paradoxical public that consistently prefers bad news while just as consistently complaining that there's too much of it — and what is one to do about a profession whose marketing philosophy and audience research combine to create an ever-rising spiral of morbid media content? These are only some of the questions raised at a two-day conference sponsored last spring by the Gannett Foundation and the School of Journalism at the University of Tennessee.

The proceedings — essentially a collection of half a dozen scholarly papers discussing current research in ethological, physiological, and psychobiological aspects of curiosity in animals and humans — make provocative, if heavy, reading. Taken together, the papers represent an original attempt to construct a scientific framework for understanding — and possibly controlling? — the phenomenon of what the researchers seem generally to agree is "too much bad news." As healthy steps toward decreasing their hypernegative messages, for example, keynoter Jack Haskins suggests that the news media experiment with positive news topics of high audience interest; provide "prosocial," constructive information along with the necessary bad news; and disseminate only those negative messages that are considered important to the audience or necessary for their decision-making. (Who would do the considering, Haskins doesn't say.) Obviously, the equal participation of working journalists in such a discussion is mightily missed.



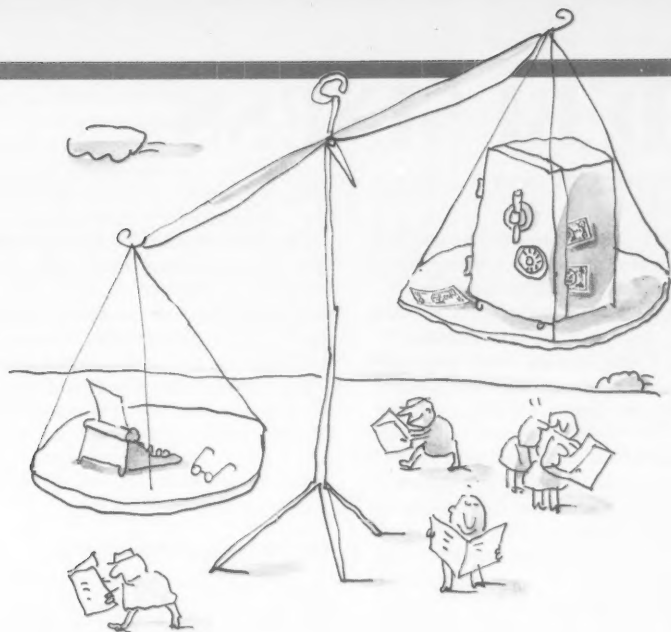
Black and white TV

Race Against Prime Time, written, produced, and directed by David Shulman, New Decade Film Library, P.O. Box 315, Franklin Lakes, N.J. 07417. \$250 purchase, \$75 rental

In the spring of 1980, two weeks after the explosion in Miami of the worst racial violence since 1967, independent filmmaker David Shulman took his videocamera to that city and began to poke around in the still-smouldering issues — among them, the role of local and network television in covering the black-white clash. This sixty-minute documentary, culled from fifty hours of footage and four years in the making, is the illuminating result. Weaving together discussions with reporters, news directors, and assignment editors on the imperatives of TV news; interviews with Liberty City residents about the performance of the white-controlled media; reflections on the process by which those media confer spokespersonship on certain members of the black community; and segments of recent and historical newscasts, the richly textured film stresses the disturbing contrast between the realities of TV newsroom operations in 1980 and the hopes embodied in media guidelines suggested by the Kerner Commission findings twelve years before.

For one thing, the conventions of television, which demanded, on deadline, dramatic images of the anarchy rampant in the streets, failed to provide for perspective on the causes of the rage; for another, although TV newsmen were sufficiently conscious of their power to air an appeal for calm from the widow of a black insurance man after an all-white jury had exonerated the four white policemen on trial for his fatal beating, the same TV newsmen apparently did not foresee the resentments aroused by coverage that concentrated on the business losses, injuries, and deaths suffered by whites at the hands of rioting blacks while ignoring similar sufferings by blacks at the hands of vigilante whites. In short, the experience in Miami provides a textbook case in the pathology of civil unrest. Shulman's study makes the lessons of that experience, for the news media and others, a little harder to forget.

CJR/Niculae Asciu



C.J. Niculae/Ascia

The money boys meet the press

The Effects of Public Ownership on Newspaper Companies: A Preliminary Inquiry, by Philip Meyer and Stanley T. Wearden, *Public Opinion Quarterly*, Fall 1984

Over the past two decades newspaper companies large and small have been abandoning in droves the joys and sorrows of private ownership in favor of the financial conveniences that come with a listing on a public stock exchange. This modest study represents one of the first steps toward ascertaining the journalistic implications of that significant switch. Prompted by the currently popular charge against U.S. companies in general — namely, that their overresponsiveness to the short-term profit concerns of Wall Street analysts has produced an incalculable loss in long-term, risk-taking investment, innovation, and growth — researchers Meyer and Wearden reason that, as far as the newspaper business is concerned, pressure from Wall Street may still be too new to be surfacing in readily apparent ways. Accordingly, it is attitudes that they choose to examine, hypothesizing first that, slowly and unconsciously, the people who run publicly held companies would come to adopt the standards of security analysts when evaluating their companies' success; second, that publishers would be among the first newspaper people in whom such attitudes would emerge; and third, that editors, too, would eventually succumb as the attitudes of ana-

lysts continued to trickle down the chain of command.

To test their hypotheses, Meyer, a professor of journalism at the University of North Carolina (and also, he is careful to note, a former employee of Knight-Ridder Newspapers, a publicly held company), and Wearden, who teaches journalism at Kent State University, conducted a comparative survey of the publishers, editors, and staff members at 331 newspapers and 94 security analysts interested in newspaper companies, asking them to rate ten given yardsticks for evaluating newspapers on a scale of one to ten. Their findings, carefully controlled for every conceivable variable, were somewhat unexpected: all three hypotheses failed. For while the analysts, not surprisingly, gave top priority to such balance-sheet yardsticks as earnings consistency and financial health, no newspaper people agreed with them, publishers included. No matter how the researchers sliced it, the publishers, editors, and staff members of the papers, privately or publicly held, independent or owned by chains, consistently put quality — product quality, editorial quality, managerial quality, — at the top of their lists.

It's all enough to give an A. J. Liebling pause, and clearly Meyer and Wearden do not intend to let the matter rest with the rosy findings of a single survey based on subjective responses. They sound an urgent call for further studies — among them, a comparison of the actual content of papers that are privately and publicly owned — that might well reveal a truer, scarier picture of the dangers of Wall Street creep.

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Those FOIA blues

TO THE REVIEW:

Steve Weinberg's "Trashing the FOIA" (CJR, January/February) must have produced a few smiles from journalists who read the response Ted Gup of *The Washington Post* received from the CIA's Larry Strawderman, who apologized for a lengthy delay in processing Gup's request for agency documents.

Ditto, almost word for word, the response I received from Mr. Strawderman a couple of years ago after we had exchanged letters for about a year. The agency finally coughed up two pages of "sanitized" (one of my favorite FOI words) documents at a total cost of a little over \$400.

Thank God, I was working for a news organization — the Mansfield, Ohio, *News Journal* — which has stamina and exercises a strong commitment to good journalism. There are some 40,000-circulation dailies that would balk at such costs and abandon the FOI as one avenue in their newsgathering effort.

I second Weinberg's call for those of us in the news business to persuade Congress that the FOIA is a vital tool for informing the public. I think it is important to remember that the FOIA is not an exclusive playground for journalists. The intent of the statute is to make government records and information readily accessible to the public — journalists and nonjournalists alike.

I would also like to see some kind of workable advocacy program put in place to monitor compliance with the law. It would be great to have someone in government offices looking over the shoulders of the sanitizers, making sure that my request is being met with the fullest possible disclosure.

JIM UNDERWOOD
Statehouse bureau chief
Horvitz Newspapers, Inc.
Columbus, Ohio

Who's a hacker?

TO THE REVIEW:

Seeing the term "hacker" used for troublemakers and snoops ("Privacy and the Electronic Newsroom," CJR, November/December 1984) is extremely irritating to me and I believe to all of those who proudly call themselves by that term. A hacker is a computer amateur; he or she works with com-

puters and their software for the fun of it. Some inept or irresponsible reporter seems to have picked up this term and seized on it, perhaps to sound knowledgeable by using jargon, and succeeded in completely perverting it. Imagine using "ham" to describe someone who fouls up the air with profanity, transmits out-of-band (illegally), or otherwise raises hell on the amateur radio bands! (The radio amateurs have a name for such people — "lids" — much too gentle a word in my opinion.) Fortunately, the hams are too solidly established to lose their proud name to some half-baked "reporter." The computer amateurs are not so well prepared to defend themselves.

R. R. GANNAWAY
Ventura, Calif.

That thankless beat

TO THE REVIEW:

I agree with Mary Ellen Schoonmaker's contention that education often gets short shrift from the news media ("The Beat Nobody Wants," CJR, January/February). I found particularly interesting her assertion that "The press missed some important elements" in covering "A Nation at Risk," the 1983 report of the eighteen-member National Commission on Excellence in Education, which warned of a "rising tide of mediocrity" in the nation's schools.

As a national reporter for Media General News Service, the Washington bureau for the daily newspapers in Richmond, Winston-Salem, and Tampa, I decided to interview members of the commission six weeks after the release of their report.

To my surprise, only four of the fourteen members I was able to contact agreed with the commission's conclusion that there was a "rising tide of mediocrity" in U.S. education. Ten members felt education had been improving in the last several years or, at least, that the slide had been arrested.

"I think the tide's going out," said Anne Campbell, former Nebraska commissioner of education. She defended "rising tide of mediocrity" as a "phrase that catches attention." Another member said the commissioners had little time for the introductory essay, in which the phrase appeared. My article went on to detail how that essay had been put together by a couple of commission members.

The article I wrote received scant attention from the nation's major media. United Press International picked up my piece, but, for the most part, the story was ignored. The fact that the commission members didn't agree with their own essay apparently wasn't news. I think it showed the willingness of much of the media to look on education as worth little thought — and no second thoughts.

STEVE GOLDBERG
Media General News Service
Washington, D.C.

The course of Human Events

TO THE REVIEW:

Has Gloria Cooper ever read or even seen *Human Events*? In her Briefings column (CJR, January/February) she refers to it as "the ultraconservative magazine." For the record, *Human Events* is a national conservative weekly newspaper.

CLIFF KINCAID
Human Events
Washington, D.C.

The VDT controversy

TO THE REVIEW:

While we support your attempts to cover the VDT issue, I would like to point out some errors of fact in Louis Slesin's article ("VDT Radiation: What's Known, What Isn't," CJR, November/December 1984).

It is not true that "there are no federal standards" for nonionizing VDT radiation. Like other electrical equipment, VDTs emit a wide range of nonionizing radiation. The emissions are far below the federal safety and FCC standards in all categories for which standards exist. Certain categories of nonionizing radiation have no standards because they have no known biological hazard.

It is not true that "what is known indicates that VDT radiation may have harmful effects." What is known clearly indicates the opposite. Mr. Slesin's citing of the Delgado experiments — which have yet to be replicated — are irrelevant. VDTs do not emit the waves Delgado implicated.

The "incidence of birth defects" among certain VDT operators is not "harder to account for" than the clusters of miscarriages. We have compiled statistics in relation to the 9 to 5 survey of selected VDT operators indicating what that organization called pregnancy problems. Even this select group is

reporting pregnancy "problems" that are right in line with national norms. Given the generally high rates of birth defects in our population, it is more than likely that "clusters" of such problems will turn up statistically on a regular basis. Furthermore, as the Centers for Disease Control will confirm, such random clusters turn up regularly among all types of workers.

Finally, the call for shielding of VDTs to alleviate "uncertainties" is wholly unscientific. Shielding for what purpose? We cannot ask millions of users to invest money in a placebo.

VICO E. HENRIQUES
President
Computer and Business Equipment
Manufacturers Association
Washington, D.C.

Louis Slesin replies: *Mr. Henriques is correct in stating that there are FCC standards for some types of nonionizing radiation from VDTs, but he neglects to add that they are designed solely to safeguard the quality of television reception. Those concerned about VDT health and safety should find it ironic that the government has set and enforces strict standards to protect machines against radiation but refuses to consider limits for workers. As for the absence of a "known biological hazard," it reflects the dismal funding history of radiation research more than experimental evidence that nonionizing radiation is harmless.*

No expert other than Mr. Henriques has challenged the emerging consensus on the similarity between the Delgado pulses and those emitted by VDTs. A new twist was recently added: in December, Microwave News reported that Delgado's group had made an error in measuring the shape of the magnetic field pulses. This discovery does not change the original finding that certain types of pulses can upset the development of chick embryos. In fact, this effect has been replicated in Dr. Kjell Hansson Mild's laboratory in Sweden.

The adverse pregnancy clusters may indeed turn out to be statistical anomalies. But now that thirteen of them are known (two new clusters have been reported since I wrote my article), it is time to find out what the true frequency of pregnancy problems is.

I did not call for shielding; I suggested it as one possible solution—one that just might help to reestablish trust in VDT safety as productivity is lost due to worker apprehension, dissatisfaction, and absenteeism.

TO THE REVIEW:

I appreciate your stories on VDT radiation, a subject of interest to me both as a reporter

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The Wall Street Journal

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Jack Willoughby, staff writer
Forbes

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Kathleen Stauder, business writer
Fort Worth Star-Telegram

THE BAGEHOT FELLOWSHIP

White, Willoughby, and Stauder were 1983-84 Fellows in the Bagehot Fellowship, an intensive program of study at Columbia University for journalists interested in improving their understanding of economics, business and finance. Guest speakers have included Paul Volcker, Donald Regan, Felix Rohatyn, Marina Whitman, John Kenneth Galbraith, David Rockefeller, Robert Reich, and J. Peter Grace.

The Bagehot Fellowship is open to journalists with at least four years' experience. Fellows receive free tuition and a living expense stipend. Westinghouse Broadcasting and Cable sponsors the Westinghouse Scholarship for a qualified broadcasting applicant. Time Inc. sponsors a scholarship for a qualified minority applicant. The deadline for the 1985-86 academic year is April 5. For further information, send in the form below.

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UNFINISHED BUSINESS

who works all day using a VDT and as president of the labor union at our newspaper, concerned with the safety of all workers at the plant. Information on the subject is not easy to get, as you know. Please keep up the good work.

SUSAN WOLBARST
Nevada City, Calif.

The asbestos beat

TO THE REVIEW:

In the November/December 1984 issue, the *Review* bestowed a laurel on the Newark *Star-Ledger* for a four-part series on problems resulting from the removal of asbestos from New Jersey's public schools. The *Review*'s commendation indicated that the *Star-Ledger* articles prompted Governor Kean to promise that the state would come up with a comprehensive corrective. Without detracting from the usefulness of the *Star-Ledger*'s mid-August 1984 review of the situation, it should be noted that public attention was called to these problems by the *Bergen Record* in articles beginning a year earlier.

In August 1983, for instance, *The Record* reported that the federal Environmental Protection Agency had found asbestos in all seven of the public school buildings in the town of Lodi, although the town's school

authorities had said ten months earlier that the material had been removed from the only structure that contained it. (Later that month *The Record* followed up with a comprehensive account of asbestos-removal deficiencies in the state.)

On October 19, 1983, *The Record* reported that not only was the state failing to police the asbestos-removal contractors, it was also failing to test the competence of the laboratories and consulting firms that the school districts were retaining as advisers. Nor was any other agency testing their competence.

On October 30, 1983, Governor Kean ordered a cabinet-level review of the situation, focusing on asbestos consultants. The governor's spokesman said the emphasis on this aspect of the problem was prompted by *The Record*'s October 19 article.

Perhaps of more interest to other media than the question of which paper had the story first and best in New Jersey is that our inquiries indicated that the experience with asbestos removal here is anything but unique. It is a national problem: untrained workers, unqualified consultants, removal work done without adequate supervision (or when a lesser remedy would have sufficed), inadequate standards for determining when a job is done right, abdication of responsibility by

the federal government. The pattern will be found in many states. The stories are out there, waiting to be reported.

JAMES AHEARN
Managing editor
The Record
Hackensack, N.J.

Turnaround in Chile

TO THE REVIEW:

Since you published my article on the improved state of press freedom in Chile (*CJR*, November/December), the situation has taken a sharp turn for the worse. On November 6, President Augusto Pinochet declared a state of siege which severely limits broadcast and print reporting "that directly or indirectly might provoke alarm among the population, alter domestic tranquillity, or [that] deals with acts defined as 'terrorist' " under the law.

Three bimonthly political magazines, *Cauce*, *Apsi*, and *Andalés*, were banned outright, while a fourth, *Hoy*, was subjected to prior censorship. Two cultural magazines were also closed, as was the opposition tabloid *Fortín Mapocho*.

On December 3, in the midst of the first antiregime protest under the state of siege, the military government announced that all

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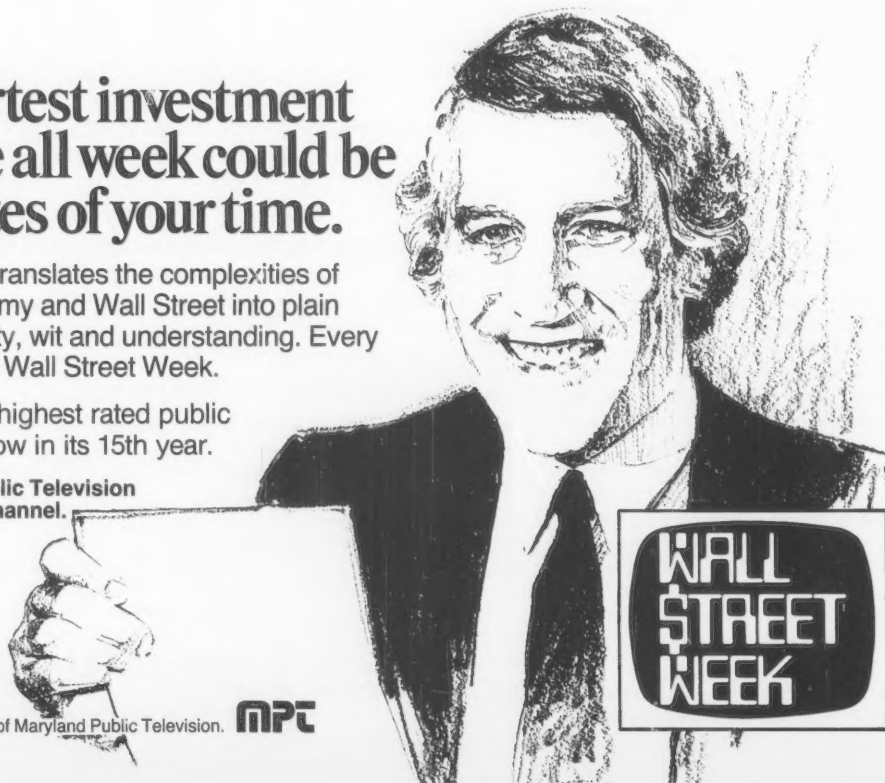
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UNFINISHED BUSINESS

foreign press credentials were void and that foreign correspondents would have to report to the government for their immediate renewal. The next day, four security agents arrived at UPI's Santiago offices and arrested correspondent Anthony Broadle. That night, he was deported. Military authorities, apparently monitoring UPI's internal telexes, accused Broadle of sending a false report to the wire service's Buenos Aires office. Two weeks later, after it became clear that the government's charge was incorrect, Broadle was allowed to return.

Some publishers and many journalists believe the state of siege was specifically aimed at curbing the fledgling opposition press, which had been enjoying a remarkable boom. Aside from censorship authority, under the existing transitory constitution the military regime already possessed virtually all the police powers it granted itself by declaring a state of siege.

TIM FRASCA
Santiago, Chile

On-target dart

TO THE REVIEW:

May I offer you a friendly dart, one you may care to reflect on and even stick in place as policy if you see any merit in it?

Over time, CJR's Darts and Laurels department, in citing radio and television stations for their practices, has on more than one occasion included their network affiliation. This seems odd. In no case that I can recall has the affiliated network had anything to do with the (normally local) issue, practice, or reporter under discussion, whether laureled or darted. The practice seems like those gratuitous additions to news stories that produce "shapely" blondes or "black" suspects, where no issue of beauty or race is involved.

Perhaps such ties should be reconsidered as irrelevant.

EMERSON STONE
Vice-president, news practices
CBS News
New York, N.Y.

The editors reply: *Mr. Stone's point is well taken. In future we will make it our policy to mention a station's affiliation or a newspaper's connection with a chain only when that information is relevant.*

Deadline

The editors welcome letters from readers. To be considered for publication in the May/June issue, letters should be received by March 20. Letters are subject to editing for clarity and space.

FELLOWSHIP DIRECTOR

Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism seeks a Director for the Walter Bagehot Fellowship Program in Economics and Business Journalism, a mid-career fellowship for professional journalists. This position may also involve teaching a business writing course to Journalism School students. Applicants should have a solid background in economics and business journalism. Teaching experience is desirable but not mandatory.

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Thomas Jefferson, 1800

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believe that deregulation has benefited rail customers and America's consumers.

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The Lower case

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Bremerton, Wash.,
Sun 1/1/85



Staff photo by Steve Zuschwald

Kean pledges to fill trash void

Newark, N.J., *Star-Ledger* 1/4/85

Never Withhold Herpes Infection From Loved One

Albuquerque Journal 12/26/84

Potential witness to murder drunk

Adirondack Daily Enterprise (Saranac Lake, N.Y.) 1/17/85

However, the General proved in court that Time defamed him when it accused him of discussing the need for revenge against the Palestinians in Beirut hours before Christian Philanthropists slaughtered innocent women and children.

Daily News Journal (Murfreesboro, Tenn.) 1/25/85

Rebel threats keep traffic light in El Salvador

The Atlanta Journal and Constitution 1/20/85

Wither the Republicans?

By William A. Rusher

Rock Island, Ill., *Argus* 1/7/85

Abortion clinic bomb damaged

Vincennes, Ind., *Sun-Commercial* 1/1/85

Cause of AIDS found—scientists

The Sacramento Union 4/24/84

Sandinistan defends regime in Sioux Falls

Worthington, Minn., *Daily Globe* 12/08/84

Perhaps the cruelest tragedy in the death yesterday of James E. Dever is that had it happened a few minutes later, he might still be alive.

Chester County, Pa., *Daily Local News* 1/9/85

Prison warden says inmates may have 3 guns

The Idaho Statesman 1/11/85

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Mail your check or money order payable to:

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Your participation will help Kodak meet its pledge to restore the Statue of Liberty.

Principal Family Name in Photo: _____

Country of Origin: _____

Year of first entry into U.S. (if known): _____

Year & Location of Photo. Year: _____

City _____

Country _____

NOTE: You may submit as many photos as you wish, but 1. Photos (prints only) must be no larger than 8" x 12". 2. Each photo must be accompanied by a separate entry coupon. If several photos are submitted, be sure each is identified. Simply tape coupon to back of each photo. Do not staple. 3. Include \$10 check or Money Order for each photo. If several are submitted, write one check for total amount. 4. Kodak not responsible for lost, torn or mutilated photos. Protect photos between cardboard inside mailing envelope.

lope. We suggest you send duplicate prints only, which can be supplied by your photo retailer. 5. Kodak reserves right not to accept photos deemed obscene or otherwise unsuitable. In such case, your money will be refunded only. 6. Payment must be submitted with photo to be included in Album. 7. You'll receive your membership certificate and an ID card to help locate your photo. Allow 8 weeks for delivery. 8. Non-members will also be welcome at the exhibit. 9. Offer expires December 31, 1986.

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